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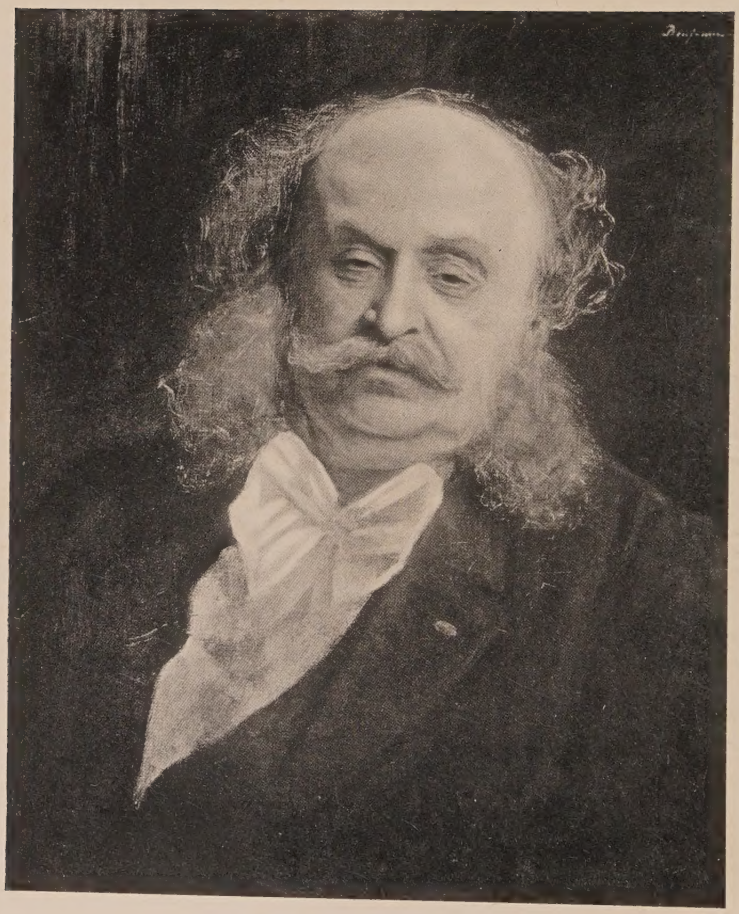
MEMOIRS OF
M. DE BLOWITZ



M. DE BLOWITZ IN LATER LIFE
[From the painting by Benjamin Constant]

Memoirs of
M. DE BLOWITZ

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MEMOIRS OF
M. DE BLOWITZ

CHAPTER I

Early Youth

MY origin, infancy and youth have been narrated so often that no one will, I hope, find fault with me if, in my turn, I myself give an account of them. Since they have appeared sufficiently interesting for others to relate, I also have acquired the right to do so without being taxed with presumption. In any case, I venture to say that, instead of the fantastic tales which have appeared, nothing but "information derived from an absolutely authorised source" will be found in the following pages. In writing these lines, which will not appear until after I am in the grave, I have but one ambition: that of saying the truth, all the truth; and I have but one desire: that of preventing persons from disfiguring, for their own pleasure or passion, events with which I have been closely connected.

. . . . . .

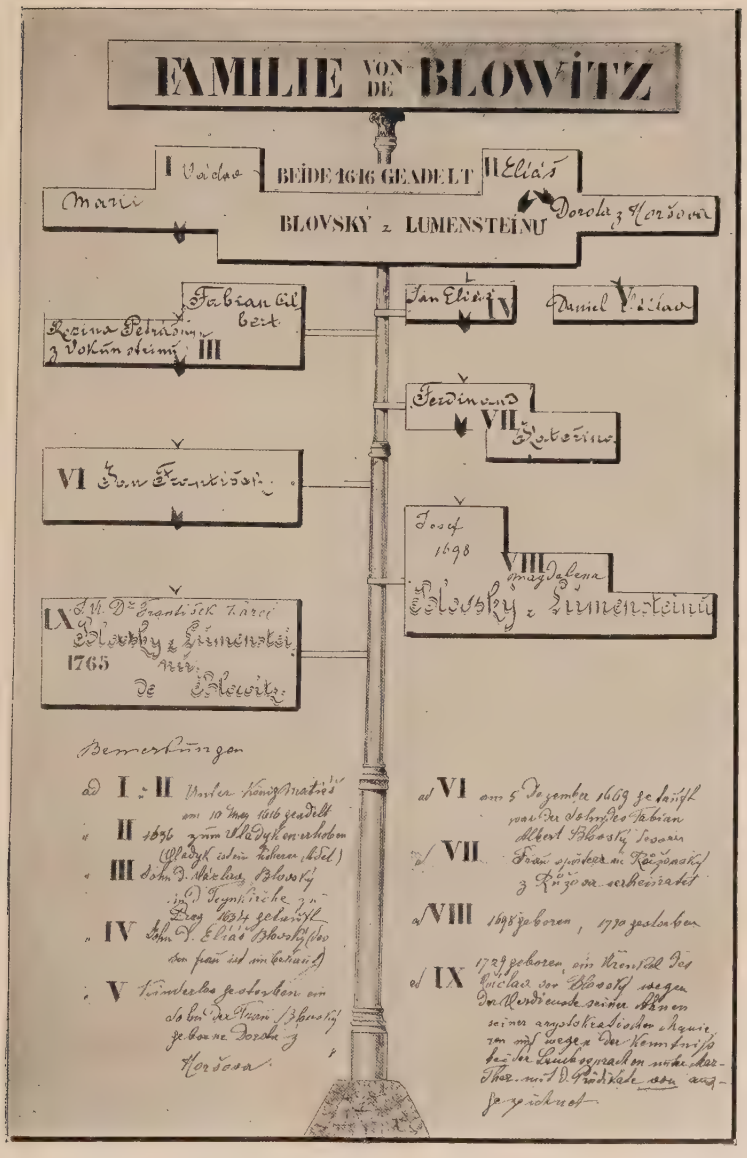
On December 28, 1825, at the Château of Blowsky, in the region of Pilsna, in Bohemia, there was born a child with a big head and a feeble body. The doctors who had been summoned to his bedside shook their heads in silence and declared "that he had a weak heart and was ill formed," and, consequently, would not live. The child's mother thereupon decided that the proper thing to do was to have him baptised without delay. And so, on December 29th, while the snow was falling heavily and

a strong wind was carrying off a peal of bells, he was conveyed to the little chapel of the little village of Blowsky, and there the Reverend Father Wasck, Archpriest of the parish, administered him with the holy sacrament of baptism. At the same time, on the old register of the church, which contained the names of all his ancestors, from Seigneur Kaspar de Blowitz of Palatine, who founded the village school, to Seigneur Marc Opper de Blowitz, who owned the ancient château, he entered the newborn child under the names of Henri-Georges-Stephan-Adolphe, and promised to say a mass in order that God might allow him to live.

I should not be telling the truth were I to say that I recall all these facts, for however good my memory may be it is not capable of that. But they have been affirmed to me so often by my mother, repeated by the venerable Archpriest, and denied by the Doctor, that, finally, I am absolutely persuaded they are true. The parish register may, however, be taken as evidence; it leaves no doubt as to my having been born a Catholic, baptised twenty-four hours after my birth, and that I did not have time to become a Jew. I regret it, moreover—for Israel——

Of my early childhood I remember but little; the few incidents that I am able to recall do not appear to me worthy of being rendered public. I will say, however, one thing. When I was six years of age but little was wanting—that little being a bridge over a stream—for me never to have been correspondent of *The Times*. This is what happened.

One summer evening there was nobody at home in the paternal château. My father was away hunting in the



THE DE BLOWITZ FAMILY TREE

environs with some of his lordly friends, and my mother was absent. I was playing in the park, when at a turn of the road an old, worn-out gypsy cart appeared on the scene. It was drawn by an emaciated horse and driven by a sordid old woman in shreds. A pale and wretched-looking man followed. In the vehicle were some raggedly garbed children, among them being a little girl with a beautifully dressed Polichinelle. The fact is, the doll Punch was altogether too beautifully dressed.

What took place? Did the man take me by the hand? Did the woman speak to me? I have forgotten, but what I have not forgotten is the attractive Polichinelle and its bright black eyes. Ten minutes afterward I was being rolled along in the gypsy cart. I had been kidnapped. It seemed to me as if new life had been suddenly infused into the emaciated horse, whose pace was quickened, and the tired-looking man pushed the cart so as to advance faster.

"If you are a good boy," said the woman, "we will let you play the drum and blow a trumpet all the time."

And in order to give me an advance taste of these future pleasures, they brought out from the back of the vehicle an old box which, when unpacked, was found to contain, helter-skelter, costumes, drums, wigs, horns—all things that I had greatly admired at the recent village *fête*.

"Have you got a locket on you?" was a question asked me by the young girl with the beautiful black eyes.

I answered by showing her a small gold locket hanging from a chain round my neck and which my mother had given me.

"All right," she said, somewhat sadly. "Be careful

and keep it, and always tell everybody that your mother placed it there. I have one also, look—and I keep it. But my mother has never come to claim me yet."

Our ride in the cart continued without a halt for five or six hours and we must have covered quite a respectable distance, when suddenly far away in the silence of the forest we heard shouts and the sounds of hunting-horns.

"They are looking for us," said the woman.

The man uttered an oath and whipped the horse. The little girl with the black eyes grasped my hand and in a very low voice said to me:

"It is better it should be thus. It is preferable that they should find you. You do not know what is in store for you if you remain with us."

I was very much amused and I looked about and listened. Evidently at the château my absence had been remarked and they were looking for me.

A terrible race ensued. The horse seemed suddenly endowed with fresh vigour, as if he were conscious of the chase that was in progress and as if he were accustomed to adventures of the kind.

The old gypsy cart jolted noisily over the stones with which the road was strewn. In the distance the sounds of the horns were distinguishable, first a long way off, then nearer, and then far away again. Will they overtake us? Will they not overtake us?

Until now we had been driving along one solitary road which bruskly ran into a glade, and two roads appeared. Which were we going to take? The one on the right or the one on the left? The man, who had not ceased swearing, hesitated. And here I firmly believe my fate

was settled. If he had taken the road on the right I do not know where I should have been at this hour.

But he took the one on the left, which led us down a little hill toward a river. After another mile the stream appeared, but there was no bridge across it. The road went no farther. As we reached this spot the horns were blowing louder than ever. The clamours of a number of men on horseback could be heard plainer and plainer. There could no longer be any doubt; they were in pursuit and about to overtake us. The spare man and the ragged woman and the wretched children certainly understood what was going on, for they quickly abandoned horse, cart, boxes and all their possessions and threw themselves into the water, swam across, and two minutes later could be seen running away at full speed on the other bank of the river.

I remained alone in the gypsy cart, alone with Polichinelle. A few minutes later my father, for he was among the men on horseback, found us lying down quietly in the rear of the cart. I had been found. I was taken back home. I do not know whether they said anything to Polichinelle, but I do know that they said something to me. And I also know very well that if the gypsy who had kidnapped me had taken the road on the right, which disappeared in the mountain mazes, I should never have been found. *Que diable!* What should I have been doing now?

. . . . . .

The above episode is the only one of any importance. All the remainder is monotonous. I never went to school, much less to any university. My young days were spent entirely in the large ancestral château, in the shade

of the wild forest. I read and worked but little. I walked a great deal. My memory, which all my lifetime has been my powerful and precious auxiliary, was formed almost entirely alone. It was innate and natural. It required no training.

In my father's room there used to be an enormous stick with a gold knob which I always admired and envied. Every time I saw it I used to ask for it; I longed to have it and keep it.

One day my father said to me:

"Listen, I will give you this stick if to-morrow you recite to me by heart the legend of 'Kosros the Wise.'"

That was a way of getting rid of me, for the Hungarian legend of "Kosros the Wise" is quite as long as Shakespeare's "Hamlet," and Sir Henry Irving will tell you that twenty-four hours constitute a very short time for one to learn "Hamlet."

Nevertheless, the following day I went to my father's room, and without a mistake or hesitation I recited to him all the wonderful legend, from the day when the daughter of Kosros chose as husband Pryémilas, a mere labourer, until the day when his sister Wlaska, at the head of an army of Amazons, won, with the aid of the Czechs, the battle of the White Mountain.

The stick with the gold knob became my property. I did not keep it. But, thank Heaven, I kept my memory.

At the age of fifteen, after a somewhat rudimentary education that, nevertheless, included various poetic legends, which I learned whenever I had a longing for some of the paternal belongings, my father decided that I should travel. He supplied me with money and gave me as

companion a tutor who had taken his degree of doctor of philosophy. I started out one morning on foot, and was soon lost in the distance, en route for unknown parts.

I think I must have travelled through the whole of the immense Empire of Austria. It was not, at that time, what civilisation has made of it at the present day. In the distant or frontier provinces superstition and fanaticism reigned supreme. During my long peregrinations I had some striking examples of both, and they have left on my mind an indelible impression.

Not very far from my native village was a quiet little country town called Grunberg. Any travellers who might nowadays venture to explore this little out-of-the-world nook of Bohemia would notice, close by a peaceful pool, an old church, an odd mixture of all styles of architecture. It is a very poor, modest little church, but it possesses a life-size statue of St. John in massive silver. Curiously enough, this statue has only one arm, and one would be inclined to protest against this willful mutilation if it were not connected with a strange incident of which I was a witness.

The day after I had left my father's château I arrived at Grunberg and found the town in the wildest state of excitement. The statue of St. John had been stolen a week before, and the whole country was searching for it. The Bishop of Klattau had ordered processions in all the neighbouring districts, and every day the priest of St. John's, an old man, but upright and of commanding appearance, besought his parishioners to tell what they knew of the theft.

I have already spoken of a small pool which is near the church. This pool was surrounded by a bank, which

was very steep on the side near the water; at the top of which was a narrow path. The procession was about to take place just as I arrived, and in order to reach the other side of the pool it had to walk for about two hundred yards along this narrow path at the top of the bank.

At the head of the procession was the old priest, praying as he walked along, and carrying a second relic, which was almost as much venerated as the statue.

Half-way along the path—I can see the whole scene distinctly—the priest stumbled against the roots of a newly planted tree, and before he had time to think of saving it, the cross fell from his hands, glided slowly down the bank and disappeared in the muddy waters of the pool.

All the people, following the example of the unfortunate priest, fell on their knees, their eyes fixed on the spot in the water where the cross had disappeared.

The dam was at once opened so that the water should not carry the sacred relic away, and every one waited for several hours. At the end of that time, to the delight of all, just as the last water was disappearing through the dam, the cross was seen. And by the side of the cross was the statue—the famous silver statue of St. John.

A cry of joy rang through the air; the cross and the statue were taken up, and it was then that the disappearance of the left arm was discovered. The thieves, whilst waiting for an opportunity of conveying the statue to a safe place, had broken off this arm, which has never been found.

The people, singing psalms and hymns of thanksgiving as they went along, repaired to the church, in order to replace the venerated statue on the pedestal which for the last week had been deprived of its sacred burden.

Just as the last individual was entering the church a part of the archway over the door gave way, fell straight on the shoulder of a peasant and cut off his left arm.

The crowd immediately surrounded the wretched man, yelling: "He's the thief! He's the thief! St. John has punished him by cutting off his arm!"

There was a terrible rush from all sides. The people attacked the peasant and in a moment his clothes were all in shreds. They were about to drag him along and hurl him into the pool without having asked him a question, or without even hesitating as to whether or not he were the real author of the theft, when the old priest interfered.

"I, alone, have the right to command here," he said. "Do not touch that man."

The crowd fell back a little and the priest continued: "You are in my church," he said, addressing himself to the peasant, "and this is an inviolable and sacred place. No one has a right to touch you here. Stay inside the church and do not leave it, for once outside you belong to human justice."

And the mutilated peasant remained there. He was in the church all day and all night, and he was still there the following day when I left Grunberg.

Five years later, when my voyage through Europe was accomplished, as I passed through Grunberg on my way to my native village, I saw, at the door of St. John's Church, an old man who had lost his left arm. He was on his knees at the threshold of the sanctuary, which he had never dared to leave, lest he should be torn to pieces by the people.

This incident shows the superstition which then reigned

in certain Austrian provinces. The following episode will show the fanaticism which was dominant.

One evening after a long journey I reached, with my travelling companion, the Croatian frontier. A dreary-looking rough road stretched as far as the eye could see alongside the mountain, and poles were placed on the roadside at intervals, just as in France the telegraph poles are seen forming a straight line along the banks of a road.

At the top of these poles human heads had been fixed, and I shuddered with horror on discovering that as far as one could see there were these poles and these heads. There had been a revolt the week before, and the Governor of the district, who had proved victorious, had decided to make an example and to inspire the population with wholesome fear.

This Governor I can see distinctly now. I was dining that evening with my tutor in a wretched little inn, on the very borders of the frontier, when he came back from his expedition. He was a sort of bashi-bazouk, with a hooked nose, long, fair mustache, and a face with a hard expression. He had three escorts, the commanders of each of which appeared to hate each other.

I could not resist asking him, later on, when he was sitting next to me at table, why he had three escorts.

"The first one," he answered, "keeps watch on the second, and the third prevents the other two from coming to any understanding with each other." This will give an idea of the social position of a governor of Croatia in the first half of the last century.

After supper, while the Governor was smoking a long pipe and the officers of the escort were playing at dice,

we heard, outside, issuing from the darkness, a dismal cry followed by shouts, disputes and fighting. The officers left their dice, and the Governor, mechanically, put his hand to his belt, from which his sword was hanging.

Upon inquiry we found it was nothing of importance; merely a woman, a kind of fortune-teller, who was going along the road when the bashi-bazouks of the escort had set upon her. The Governor ordered them to bring her in so that she could tell our fortunes. We each of us showed her our hand and she proceeded to foretell the future. I remember the scene with the most astonishing distinctness. In the smoky room with its low ceiling, near to the fire, which was nearly out, the poor creature was intent on the lines of our palms, and in a slow, monotonous voice she told us her rigmarole.

When she came to mine, though, she suddenly became more animated, and her dull eyes lighted up a little.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, "I've never seen a hand like yours. There's a fine fate in store for you."

"What is it?" I asked.

"You'll sit down with kings and have princes at your table." She did not tell me any more, but that was quite enough, and all night long I dreamed of nothing but conquests and kingdoms. I tried to imagine all the situations which would allow me to sit down with sovereigns, but I never thought of the only one which could ever enable the prophecy to come true.

. . . . . .

This voyage was to last five years, and five years it lasted. I went through Germany, Russia, Austria, Italy and Switzerland. The most tragic part of it was the return home.

I was just twenty years of age, and when I approached my native village all the memories of my childhood crowded to my mind. One learns a great many things in a five-years' journey through the world, and one forgets much also very quickly. Suddenly, at a turn in the road, flanked by the mountain, the Château of Blowksy came in sight, and I do not know how it was, but as soon as I saw its old, cracked façade, so gloomy and dismal-looking, as soon as I glanced at its dark, mysterious tower, a sort of presentiment took possession of me.

I hurried on and soon reached the park. It seemed to me that everything looked neglected and rather deserted. The grass was long, and the meadows appeared to be untended. I pushed the door open, and a cry rang through the house. It was my mother.

"Where is father?" I asked anxiously.

"Here he is," she replied; and, seated by the fire in the large dining-room, I saw him, but he was so changed that I scarcely recognised him.

When the first excitement of my arrival was over he began to question me.

"Did not you see any one before you reached the house?" he asked.

"No one," I replied.

"And you do not know all that has happened here since you left?"

"I know nothing," I answered.

My father's voice trembled slightly as he told me. It was a very ordinary, every-day story. The fortune of the whole family was lost. A notary with whom the greater part of our money had been left had risked it

in speculations which had turned out badly, and to sum up the matter briefly, we were ruined.

"You'll have to work for your living," said my father in conclusion. I do not know why, but the thought of the gypsy woman whom I had seen at the Croatian frontier suddenly crossed my mind, and I remembered her prediction. I did not appear at all discouraged; on the contrary, I smiled as I answered my father.

"All right," I said, "don't you worry yourself about me. I shall be able to earn a living."

"What do you think of doing?" he asked.

"I shall start to-morrow for France, and from there go to America. A year ago, when I was in Genoa, I made the acquaintance of one of the leading industrial men of Ohio. He offered me a situation in a big agricultural affair out there. I refused, but I shall go to him now, and I am certain he will give me employment."

"That's right," said my father; "I see that you have plenty of determination." The evening, however, was very sad, and that night was the last I spent in my father's house. Life was before me, full of chance and unexpected things. I did not fear anything, but bravely decided to venture forth. The farewell moment was even more sad than the evening had been. My mother was in tears, and my father, who was very pale, stood on the terrace until I was out of sight.

"Good-by," I said, and my last words were, "Perhaps you will never see me again, but I hope you will hear something about me."

And I plunged into the unknown—into life.

. . . . . .

A few weeks later I arrived at Angiers, in France, on

the banks of the Loire, on my way to Havre, where I intended to embark for America.

I travelled in what the French call a "diligence," which was merely a horrible carriage, badly built, badly appointed, and with wretched horses. If modern civilisation had done nothing but give us railways instead of the diligence, it would deserve the gratitude of all human beings—I mean, of course, of all human beings who travel.

My particular diligence went along that wonderful and admirable road which all English and Americans who have visited France know so well, and which skirts the bank of the Loire. It started from Tours, passed through Angiers, and was to go on to Nantes. At Nantes I intended travelling by water to Havre, where I hoped to embark for the United States.

As we entered the chief street of Angiers something occurred which was destined to influence my whole career. This was the second incident which decided my fate in life. The first was the wrong road which the gypsies, who had kidnapped me, took to cross the river. This second incident happened in driving over the paving-stones of Angiers when the diligence gave such jolts that the stem of my pipe broke between my teeth.

My first care in getting out of the conveyance was, of course, to rush to a shop for a new stem. I had scarcely finished this most prosaic transaction when, on leaving the shop, I knocked up against a tall, slight man, with hair just turning gray, who happened to be coming in. I apologised, but the gentleman, after gazing at me intently, suddenly exclaimed:

"Why, upon my word, I think I recognise you. Are you not young Blowitz?"

"Certainly."

"Don't you remember me?"

"Not at all."

"I saw you five or six years ago at your father's château. I am Count Kolowrath, an old friend of your family."

I remembered now having seen the Count in days gone by, and I recognised him. We talked together a few minutes, and I told him the sad events that had taken place at our home in Bohemia. He took the greatest interest in my story, and insisted on my letting the diligence continue its journey without me, and delaying my departure for a day. He was only passing through Angiers and lived in Paris, where he was very intimate with all the political men of the day.

The result of our meeting was that I did not start for America the next day, nor yet the day after, nor even the week after, but I went with him to Paris.

Serious events were then taking place there. A republic—the Republic of 1848—had succeeded the monarchy of King Louis Philippe. I was too much interested in all that was going on, too much taken up by this political fever, by this overthrowing of a government and by this destruction of old-established institutions, to think of going to America. I remained in Paris, and I observed what was happening around me.

I must now make a confession to my readers. Nature, cities and countries have never had much attraction for me. The stone façades of houses, picture galleries, the sculpture of public buildings and monuments, the clever

arrangement of gardens, all these things have very rarely captured my attention. That which appeals to me and which I am always searching for is the soul which is concealed behind the silent immobility of things—it is life and movement which interest me. I have spent hours contemplating a crowd, studying its agitation, taking note of its continual motion. And what life, what movement, what a crowd there was, there before me, in this Paris, which is the brain of one of the leading countries of the world, and toward which came ebbing all the passions, all the anger, all the aspirations of a whole race and of a whole nation!

Count Kolowrath did not abandon me, but introduced me to some of the influential French persons with whom he was on friendly terms. Among the number were M. Thiers and M. de Falloux, the latter of whom was destined to have such an admirable career as a statesman, and who was the veritable organiser of Public Instruction in France. M. de Falloux was very curious about men and things in foreign lands; he always talked willingly with me, and he invited me to private literary gatherings, at which lectures were given on the most varied subjects. One day I received from M. de Falloux an invitation card on which were the following words: "M———" (a name which I have forgotten) "will speak on literature in Germany and Provence." I went to this *soirée* and, on arriving, I found M. de Falloux, usually so calm and so reserved, in a great state of excitement and nervousness.

I inquired what was the matter.

M. de Falloux told me that his lecturer had not yet arrived and that he feared he would not now come.

"I am very much annoyed," he said, "as several of

my guests had been looking forward to hearing him discuss this question, and I fear they will be disappointed."

An idea flashed through my mind. "Why not get some one immediately to take the lecturer's place?" I suggested.

"That would not be very easy," replied M. de Falloux.

"Will you let me try?" I asked. "I know very little about Provence, or, to speak frankly, I don't know anything at all, but I am very well up in German literature and I would do my utmost not to bore your guests."

M. de Falloux smiled; he was very much amused.

"Agreed," he said, "and I am very much obliged."

Five minutes later, with plenty of assurance, I was discussing German literature and its connection with the literature of Provence. I compared, quoted and analysed examples. I was witty, evidently, for my audience laughed a great deal; and I was even eloquent, for I was applauded.

When I had finished a lady approached me and in the most affected way said: "Oh, monsieur, there are, perhaps, several things to find fault with in what you say about German literature, but all that you said about the literature of Provence was perfect. One can see how thoroughly you know that country."

M. de Falloux, who was standing near, burst out laughing, and then, shaking hands, thanked me heartily and, drawing me aside, said: "What an admirable lecturer on foreign literature you would make!"

"If ever you become Minister," I answered, "I will take you at your word, and ask you for a professorship."

"Agreed," he said; "yours shall be the first appointment I make."

And it happened as he had said, for M. de Falloux, on becoming Minister of Public Instruction, appointed the young man, who had been seen having his pipe mended in one of the shops of Angiers, to a professorship of foreign literature in that very city.

I was not destined to stay very long in Angiers, though, nor in the University. In 1856 I was appointed to the chair of foreign literature at Marseilles. It was there that I met the lady who became my wife, and who, as the companion of my life for thirty-five years, was with me always, through good and through evil days. She was French, and her father, M. Arnaud d'Agnel had been Paymaster in the Navy; her uncle on her father's side had been a Brigadier. Her mother belonged to an old aristocratic family of the Var, and her maternal uncle was connected with the Bourbon family.

Our marriage took place in 1858, and it was not until twelve years later that I embraced the career which was to be the veritable passion of my life.

Some of these twelve years were spent in commercial affairs, for I had always had the mania of believing myself very clever in mechanics. I had invented a machine for combing flax at great speed. I began by buying a workshop large enough to hold the machine, and the next thing I did was to have the said machine constructed, at great expense.

When everything was ready I gave a big *fête*, in order to celebrate the success of my invention. Every one came for miles round, and more than a thousand persons were present. They all congratulated

MADAME DE BLOWITZ

From a photograph made during the last year of her life

me, drank champagne, looked at the machine, and admired it.

When the reception was over, the guests gone and the champagne glasses empty, I thought the moment had arrived for trying the machine and setting it in motion.

As everything was ready and the steam up, I said to the engineer: "Go!" and I myself turned the tap which was to set it in motion. There was immediately a most formidable detonation. Everything blew up in the air, the window panes were all broken, and I was thrown violently down, whilst a great iron bolt struck my forehead.

I was picked up for dead, and it was owing to my wife's nursing that I was able to get about again three weeks later, cured of my wound, and still more effectually cured of my industrial inventions. Never from that time forth have I attempted to set any machinery in motion.

It is with this incident that my reminiscences of early youth come to an end. It has required a certain effort on my part to recall them, first, because I do not care to dwell on those far-off days of the past, and, secondly, because I have been obliged to put myself constantly in the foreground, instead of speaking about the events with which I have been connected and the men with whom I have come in contact.

In my next chapter I shall endeavour to retrace some of these events, and describe some of these men, who, one and all, belong to the history of the nineteenth century.

But, such as they are, without order and without coherence, the few lines I have written may at least have a certain philosophical value. They will show that great

results may sometimes spring from very slight causes, and that in order to become a journalist of note in the world very little is often all that is required—just a pipe to break at the right moment on a journey.

CHAPTER II

How I Became a Journalist

In 1869, the second French Empire was beginning to show signs of yielding to the numerous and combined assaults of the liberal opposition. When a throne has been seized by a bold stroke, when it has been retained by repression, when the hold over the country is dependent on the docile vote of the unthinking masses, there can be no abandonment of the absolute prerogatives the ruler has bestowed on himself. The slightest concession becomes a weapon in the hands of the assailant, and the autocratic fortress only remains impregnable so long as no breach can be made.

In 1869 the torrent of the opposition had been dashing for seventeen years against the foundations of the Second Empire, and the attentive eye could already discover some of the breaches that were being made in the fortifications which surrounded the throne of Napoleon III. At Paris, however, the central power remained under great illusions, and played with the fire of liberal reform. In the provinces, on the contrary, the representatives of the Government felt that their power was diminishing. They were constantly colliding with audacious opponents, and in consequence of the opposition they met they became more overbearing, more tyrannical, and, for that very reason, more unpopular. From this

syllogistic circle there was no retreat or escape except by revolution or reaction.

For many years I had now been living at Marseilles. I had married, as I told my readers in a preceding chapter, a lady, a native of the great southern French city. But at that time I was not yet naturalised, and I considered it almost a duty to stand aloof from the domestic politics of France. Nevertheless, as my marriage inevitably brought me into contact with certain persons, I was supposed by everybody to belong to the Legitimist party, at the time militant around me.

The elections of 1869 were close at hand. It was apparent that the contest would be a violent one in the extreme. All sides were preparing for the fight. The opposition formed a league called "The Liberal Union," within which there was room made for the three parties —the Legitimists, the Orleanists, and the Democrats. The Government did what it could to strengthen its position. It reinforced its Prefects; it decorated with the Legion of Honour its chief political supporters, and dismissed auxiliaries of whom it was not sure. In the great centres it established newspapers to all appearances violently democratic, but the real purpose of which was to sow dissension among the parties forming the Liberal Union.

During the day the editors or their staff wrote articles denouncing the Empire and the Royalist party. At night these same journalists repaired to the Prefectures to receive their instructions.

Such was the state of affairs throughout France and more especially at Marseilles. In that city the candidature of M. de Lesseps, in opposition to M. Thiers and

M. Gambetta, was very popular. Gambetta and his pretensions were made the subject of endless jokes and laughter on the part of the pseudo-democratic official press. M. de Lessep's candidature was represented as quite independent. Therein resided his only chance of success, for if there had been a suspicion that it was official, his position would have been irremediably compromised.

Strange to say, I was the man who almost unwittingly dealt the fatal blow to his chances. Even at this time of my life the uncontrollable desire to get at the bottom of sensational reports haunted me. While it was strongly suspected at Marseilles that M. de Lesseps was an official candidate, and while the Government was making every effort to prove the contrary, one of my friends had gone to Egypt. I kept up a correspondence with him. In writing to me he recounted with much detail incidents which threw a strong light on the whole subject. An orderly officer of the Emperor had arrived in Egypt. A special train was placed at his disposal by Ismail Pasha. This officer lost no time in posting on to M. de Lesseps. At the urgent request, and in compliance with an almost formal order, of the Emperor, the constructor of the Suez Canal, who, as such, had already become popular, consented to become a candidate for Marseilles.

Without considering the consequences, I lost no time in communicating this information to one of my friends —the editor of a Legitimist newspaper. The news burst like a tempest on the public of Marseilles, and swept away in its irresistible whirl the candidature of M. de Lesseps.

The very next day the Socialist newspaper, in obedience to orders, made an incredibly violent attack on me. I

was terrified at what I had done. I was somewhat in the position of an elephant from whose back a cannon has been discharged, and which first feels the shock without knowing whence it comes. I was a foreigner without protection, at the mercy of a Government still feared. My friends begged me to take no notice of the abominable calumnies directed against me by the sham-democratic newspaper, which for years afterward was the source of the abuse poured upon me. I was simple-minded enough to bring an action against it in the law courts. I won my case, but by that time the newspaper had ceased to appear, and the editor, as a reward for his electioneering services, had obtained the post of Sub-Prefect in an out-of-the-way district of the Basses-Alpes.

In the election, M. de Lesseps had the support of a wretched minority; and it was M. Gambetta who, to the surprise of everybody, was returned by a majority of two to one.

He entered the Corps Législatif triumphantly. The journal and its editor disappeared, but the defeated Prefect survived, and it was on me that he sought to avenge himself.

In a long report, which I have since been able to peruse, he applied for my expulsion from France. Scarcely an hour after it was written he saw my wife in the street, and was not ashamed to hold out to her the very hand which had just signed that miserable denunciation. The same evening I was informed of the fact, and hurried off to Paris to ward off its consequences.

M. Thiers, whom I had met very often on my arrival in France at the house of M. de Falloux and at Count Kolowrath's, took the matter in hand, and the demand for my

expulsion was put aside. My friends advised, nay, besought me to leave Marseilles, and toward the end of 1869 I followed their advice and retired to a small estate in the Drôme, near Valence.

Such was my first experience in journalism, and it might easily have caused me to abandon the career.

I lived for some months in my retreat, and to pass the time I read a great deal, not only books but newspapers of France, Germany and northern Europe. I had nothing else to do.

When the Hohenzollern question came up, I wrote regularly to M. Thiers, giving him the news which reached me. He continued to show me great good-will. I knew that since the hurried conclusion of peace between Prussia and Austria, in 1866, the Germans expected a conflict with France, and were preparing for it. I knew that the southern States of Germany were under the watchful and suspicious surveillance of Prussia, and I also knew that if there should be war the result would cruelly disappoint the hopes of France. I never ceased writing to this effect, and bringing facts confirming my opinions to the knowledge of M. Thiers, whose own experience had led him to similar conclusions.

When the war broke out I contemplated with terror, from my retreat, the complete and fatal ignorance prevalent in France, and the false feeling of security which was to be so promptly and terribly dispelled.

One piece of disastrous news rapidly followed another—Reichshofen; Spiekern; the abandonment of the first lines of defense; the retreat; the admitted want of food, arms and supplies; the telegrams of MacMahon, "I am defeated; send me supplies"; and lastly, the astounding

despatch from Napoleon III.: "We have been surprised in the very act of forming. The enemy had also mitrailleuses." All this left no doubt as to the future toward which France was drifting.

On September 2nd came the disaster of Sedan, immediately followed by the fall of the Empire.

The Republic was proclaimed.

As soon as the new régime began to work I applied for my naturalisation papers. My request was complied with. Some weeks later I became a French citizen, and I received, at the time, a letter from M. Adolphe Crémieux, then Minister of Justice, which ran as follows:

"Your application for naturalisation, in the midst of our great disasters appears to me as the signal of a new life for us. A country which, in the midst of such catastrophes, recruits citizens like you is not to be despaired of."

As always happens, having been persecuted by the Empire, I was now ranked in the now dominant party, and those who had stood aloof from me now showed a great desire to be on better terms with me.

I returned to Marseilles.

I found that city in a lamentable and grotesque state of anarchy. Numerous associations had been hastily formed under the pretext of making the Germans withdraw from France. One of the leaders had proclaimed himself Commissary of the Government. He had recruited into a noisy and discontented, but purely home-abiding guard, all the "foaming dregs" of Christophanes. From that element of roughs, rowdies, loafers,

he drew the pretorian group who surrounded him and by means of whom he terrorised the city.

Toward the latter days of March, 1871, the situation became alarming. The Commune was proclaimed on the 23rd, five days after its official announcement in Paris. A grotesque and lamentable state of anarchy prevailed. The revolutionary forces took possession of the Prefecture.

The enemies of order flocked in from foreign countries, and terrorists from all parts of the world seemed to have congregated in the town.

As I had now become a naturalised Frenchman, I felt it my duty to assist my adopted country as well as I could, and I offered my services to General Espivent de la Villeboisnet, who had been entrusted with the difficult task of restoring order.

The post and telegraph office had been seized by the Revolutionists. They suppressed every suspected letter; they retained every telegram which might have informed the regular Government at Versailles of the frightful state of affairs prevailing in the great southern city.

I had just let a flat, in a house belonging to my wife, to the Eastern Telegraph Company, which had a special wire to Oran. I had a private interview with the local manager of the Eastern Telegraph Company, and obtained from him permission to make a junction between his wire and that of the Versailles Government. Then one night, when the insurgent officials at the Marseilles post-office thought they had entire control of the wires, I threw a ladder from a neighbouring house, reached by the roofs the offices of the Eastern Telegraph Company, and opened a secret and direct communication with the outside world.

The Lyons office replied to me, and put me in communication with Versailles.

I immediately informed the Government of the doings of the Communists.

M. Thiers fully realised the danger. If the Commune triumphed in Marseilles, the whole of the south of France would rise against his Government.

Accordingly, in reply to my first telegram, M. Thiers gave orders to the effect that General Espivent de la Villeboisnet must at any price restore order in the town.

Two days later, on April 5th, the regular troops, which had been concentrated at Aubagne, near Marseilles, burst into the town and recaptured the Prefecture, which had become the headquarters of the insurgents.

I need not enter here into the details of that terrible day. Everybody did his duty, and I was, I trust, no exception to the rule. Be this as it may, twenty-four hours later the battle was won, and the Commune of Marseilles was extinguished.

General Espivent and my comrades of the loyal National Guard appointed me to report personally to M. Thiers, at Versailles, what had taken place, as, having been an eye-witness, I could narrate the facts better than any one else. Accordingly on April 6th I set out for Versailles.

On my arriving there, after informing M. Barthélemy Saint-Hilaire, then General Secretary of the Government, of the mission entrusted to me, he made an appointment with me at his residence for the following morning. He then took me at once to M. Thiers.

The President of the Republic was in a very simply furnished room. In one of the corners was a narrow

low camp-bed, covered with brown leather. The floor was littered with maps; and M. Thiers was on his knees poring over a plan of Paris.

He looked up and, on recognising me, said without rising: "Oh, yes, you have come from Marseilles; but I have no time at present to hear your report. You must go and see Calmon." And he became again engrossed in the map of Paris.

I therefore saw M. Calmon, Under-Secretary at the Ministry of the Interior. He listened rather heedlessly to what I said, for he cared much less to know those who had done their duty than the men who had neglected it. I therefore cut short what I had intended telling and hurriedly left him.

I was quite discouraged. I bitterly regretted having vainly undertaken a long journey and exposed myself to such a disappointment, and I felt that my best course would be to return to Marseilles.

Two days later I returned to take leave of M. Thiers. He came forward and welcomed me in a more friendly way.

"My reception was not encouraging to you the other day," he said, "but I was then in the deepest anxiety. I thought all was lost. Now I know that we shall get over this trial. I feel more master of myself than I did the other day, and I am ready to hear what you have to tell me. I am aware of the great services you have rendered us. I have received letters from friends at Marseilles which leave no doubt as to that."

He then put a number of questions to me, and I described to him the events that had taken place, both in their burlesque and in their gloomy aspects. He seemed

to be very much interested in my narrative, and when I had finished he asked me:

"Well, what are you going to do now?"

"I have come, Monsieur le Président, to bid you farewell. I am going home to-morrow, as I have left my family in the South."

"Do not go away," he said briskly. "Stay here a little longer. Come again and tell me what you are doing. I will soon let you know in what way you can be useful to us."

I yielded to M. Thiers's desire.

. . . . . .

Some days later I was able to take a step which had no small influence on my destiny. The siege of Paris, by the Versailles troops, was nearing its end. I had gone to Brimborion to see the batteries shelling the Communists. In a casemate near the batteries a young American lady was looking through a loophole. We discussed the events which were taking place, and in the midst of our conversation, on looking again through the hole, the young lady exclaimed:

"What is this? Look here! Some one is waving a white flag over the ramparts."

I took up my glasses and saw that a white flag was being waved violently and that there was a great stir among the soldiers encamped all about the Seine, while large columns were marching forward.

The demon of journalism took hold of me. I turned to the young American lady (whom I have never since met) and said to her: "Please remain here and be good enough to notice attentively all that happens. I shall be back in half an hour."

I left the casemate and rushed to the Sèvres road, where I had left my cab. I said to the driver, "To the Versailles Prefecture as fast as you can."

I had the good luck to arrive in the courtyard of the Prefecture at the very moment M. Thiers was taking his daily "constitutional."

I ran up to him exclaiming, "Monsieur le Président, the troops are entering Paris."

M. Thiers gave a sudden start. "Where do you come from?" he asked.

"From Brimborion. A man is waving a white flag on the ramparts, and the troops are now moving onward."

Ten minutes afterward M. Thiers was leaving Versailles in a carriage on the road to Paris.

Some days later he sent for me and made me tell in detail all that had occurred. He was very much interested and he said:

"It is a latest news department that would best suit you. In a day or two I think I shall be able to tell you something about your future career."

When I saw him again he told me he was thinking of giving me a consulate.

"It will only be for a start," he said. "I am going to send you to Riga as Consul-General, but depend upon it, you will not remain there long."

I concluded that the affair was settled, and began to study the situation of Riga. But M. Thiers had reckoned without his host. M. Meurand was then at the head of the French Foreign Office. He jealously guarded the consular fortress against the invasion of any outsider, and when M. Thiers proposed me for the post at Riga,

M. Meurand did not openly oppose him, but postponed the appointment. Later on he proposed to M. Thiers to send me to Rustchuk. M. Thiers refused and two months passed by, M. Thiers insisting all the time upon my being sent to Riga, and M. Meurand persisting in his idea of sending me to Rustchuk. I was quite disheartened.

A few weeks later, however, some consolation was afforded me. It came about as follows: One morning a friend of mine came in great haste to my house. He said:

"Do you know you have been decorated for having rendered exceptional services?"

The *Official Journal*, in fact, after announcing my nomination, used the following words: "Gave evidence of the most disinterested devotion to the cause of order—exposed himself to the greatest danger on the 4th of April in conveying the orders that had been entrusted to him."

I take this opportunity of reproducing the above words, for they show exactly why my decoration was granted. Let them be remembered by those who, when I am no more, may have to defend my memory, should it ever be attacked.

As soon as communications with Paris had been opened I went into the town. I made several calls, but one of my principal visits was for my old and dear friend, Mr. Frederick Marshall, whose eldest daughter was at the time very ill. Of her let me say one word. She was a girl of fifteen, of high spirits, and of bright and poetic beauty, with qualities of heart and soul which made her too good for this commonplace world.

It was at this house I met, for the first time, Laurence Oliphant, then the special correspondent of the *Times*

Sitting with him for hours near the couch of the sick girl, I soon yielded to the charm which Oliphant inspired in all who had the good fortune to have any intercourse with him. He had come to France in compliance with an order from the head of the sect to which he then belonged, the "Brethren of the New Life." He fulfilled his mission with the ardent docility of a well-initiated and sincere disciple, and from the somewhat lofty standpoint of a man who had drunk too deeply of the sweets of life not to despise them. His observations were sharp and severe, but his political doctrines were of unswerving rectitude, and his judgments on men and things were both caustic and infallible. His letters in the *Times* were read with avidity, combining as they did accurate observation with a lively style. This, at all events, is what I have heard, for I never read them myself.

On July 21st—the date is an historical one for me—my dear friend, Mr. Frederick Marshall, came and told me: "Something has just happened which may interest you. Mr. Hardman, who is the colleague of Laurence Oliphant, the special correspondent of the *Times*, has just left Paris and will not return for a fortnight. Oliphant is very much inconvenienced. He cannot be both at Versailles and Paris, and he is looking out for some one who could at least do a part of Hardman's work. I thought the post would suit you, as you see M. Thiers daily, and you complain of not having enough to do."

"You are right," I replied. "I not only like your proposal, but you are doing me a real favour, for in this way I can see M. Thiers without the unpleasant necessity of reminding him of his promises."

Marshall lost no time in conveying my reply to Oliphant,

who was much pleased. We all three met. Then Oliphant, who had not yet broached the subject to me, explained to me the duties discharged by Hardman and requested me to begin the following day. I listened attentively to what he said, but he saw that I felt some difficulty which I did not venture to express.

Finally he said: "You seem to hesitate. Did you expect me to speak about the remuneration?"

"Not at all," I promptly replied. "In this case it is not a question of money, I can assure you; it is something more embarrassing. Before beginning I should like to see a copy of the *Times*."

Both looked at me in amazement.

"What?" exclaimed Oliphant, "you do not know the *Times*?"

"Excuse me," I replied, "I know the *Times* very well. I know quite well what it is. I have a friend at Marseilles who concludes all his political discussions with the words: 'There can be no question about that; the *Times* says so.' The phrase has become proverbial among his friends. But I have long been living in the somewhat remote southern departments and I have never seen a copy of the paper."

Oliphant broke into loud laughter. He went out of the room and came back with a copy of the *Times*, containing some twenty pages, which he spread out on the floor, covering the best part of the carpet with it. I was dumbfounded.

"A friend of mine," I said, "always told me I ought to write in a roomy daily paper. I think that size would satisfy him."

Mr. Oliphant then explained to me the mechanism of

the paper—the telegrams; the leaders; the record of Parliamentary proceedings; the law and police reports; the money market and commercial intelligence; the foreign correspondence; the letters to the editor; the court circular and fashionable news; the reports and speeches out of Parliament and the sermons by eminent preachers; the paragraphs; the literary, dramatic, musical and artistic criticisms; the column of births, deaths and marriages; the meteorological reports and storm warnings; the sporting news, including horse-races, yachting, cricket matches, etc.; the articles on geographical discoveries and on scientific questions; and the reviews of important books.

I was shown the long, compact columns of advertisements, all carefully scrutinised, classified and arranged under headings, where supply and demand are brought into juxtaposition with the regularity of machine work; where no advertisement unworthy of the newspaper is at any price inserted, precautions being taken to insure the good faith of the advertiser. All this explained to me the success of the great English newspapers, how they came into possession of the vast resources at their disposal, and the benefits they confer on the people for whom they are at once a curb, a power, a stimulant and a glory. I was delighted to find employment, even for a time, on the greatest of such journals.

The following day I went to Versailles. I found M. Thiers in a very irritable state of mind. He was indignant with all French political parties. He accused the Royalists of perfidy, the Republicans of ingratitude and the Bonapartists of imprudence. I left him without daring to speak of my new occupation, but on reflecting

on what he had said I drew up a note which I sent to Mr. Oliphant. He was very much pleased with it.

"A genuine hit," he said. "There is not a word to alter in it. You are a born journalist."

He then sent off my first telegram to the *Times*. The following afternoon, as I was walking along the boulevards, I bought a copy of the *Liberté*. In the latest news I saw the telegram I had sent on the previous night under the words, "A telegram from Paris to the *Times* says." I experienced one of the strongest emotions I ever felt in my life. The power of the telegraph in its connection with journalism flashed upon me at that moment, and I felt I could turn it to account. I then resolved that I would remain in Paris and become a journalist.

. . . . . .

The day after the publication of my first telegram I went to see M. Thiers, not without apprehension. He was awaiting me with impatience.

"Tell me," he said at once, "how it comes about that the *Times*, and after it all the French papers, were able to publish a conversation which I had with you when none else was present."

All hesitation was out of the question, so I told him the truth immediately. It was a most dramatic surprise. He, too, saw at once the power he would gain in an indirect but striking manner by placing his ideas thus before the public mind. At the same time, I think he felt relieved at being able to discontinue his struggle with M. Meurand, who persisted in defending his position with the utmost tenacity. M. Thiers was not over-pleased when I told him that my appointment was temporary.

à Mr Blowitz
affectueusement
A Thiers
Novembre 1876

The conversation I had with him supplied me with matter for a new telegram and for a fresh and no less admirable letter by Oliphant, and it was in this way that we were able to carry on our joint work. Some days afterward I asked permission from M. Thiers to visit with Oliphant the prisons in which the Communists were confined. M. Thiers gladly granted the permission.

I must explain that Mr. Hardman, carried away by his feelings and without taking into consideration the frightful difficulties the Government of Versailles had to overcome, had, hastily and in perfect good faith, given an account in his letters of these temporary and defective makeshift buildings, which had produced a deep impression on public opinion all over Europe. M. Thiers was delighted to see us set right the errors which had found their way into these letters. Accompanied by Colonel Gaillard, who at that time assisted General Appert, we went through the prisons of the Orangerie, the Chantiers, and the camp of Satory, where the Communists were confined.

General Appert, who afterward discharged the duties of Russian Ambassador in a way which gained for him general esteem, was at that time entrusted with the organisation and direction of the temporary prisons. He displayed in this capacity all the humanity compatible with the circumstances. The events had taken everybody by surprise. Each day that passed between the 21st and the 26th of May, the incendiary fires, the massacres and the fusillades—the most horrible episode in modern history—had sent swarms of captives to Versailles. It had been impossible to do otherwise than huddle them together.

When we visited the prison the Commune was not finished. It appeared to us hideous, grotesque and sublime. In the prisons of the Chantiers we saw a young woman squatting on the floor who attracted special attention.

She was one of the most beautiful women I have ever seen. Her long black tresses fell over her bare shoulders, and as she had torn her dress to shreds, not to wear the clothes of the "accursed Versaillaise," one could see her naked body through the rents. She was tall and graceful, and on the approach of visitors she reared her head proudly, like a war-horse about to neigh. Her bright eyes glistened; a blush overspread her face. She compressed her lips, ground her teeth, and burst into a shrill, defiant, vindictive laugh when she recognised the officer of the prison who accompanied us. In the last struggle of the Commune she had been fighting at the side of her lover. She had seen him fall and, armed with a dagger, had rushed upon the Captain who had just taken the barricade and furiously stabbed him, plunging her weapon again and again into her victim. Before she could be removed from his body she had cut, bitten and torn it with all the fury of a hyena. She was taken to the prison covered with blood, which she had dabbled over her body and clothes. She had to be bound and gagged before she would allow the blood to be washed off. Hideous!

At Satory, while we were passing through the camp, one of the prisoners, jauntily and with a smile on his face, came up to Colonel Gaillard. I never saw a more ridiculous caricature. He was thin, bony and narrow-shouldered. His head was compressed, and his features looked

as if they had not been meant for the same face. He was in rags, but he wore, like a Castilian beggar, soiled linen—on which it would have been necessary to write, "This is a shirt"—a long, loose overcoat, and a dilapidated tall hat. He was a student nicknamed "Pipe-en-Bois," who had discharged the duties of secretary to the Delegate of Foreign Affairs. On one occasion he had offered a pot of beer to Lord Lyons, to pass the time while waiting in the Grand Salon d'Attente at the Quai d'Orsay. The offer had not been accepted, but had been acknowledged with a smile. He came up to Colonel Gaillard.

"They tell me, Colonel," he said, "that we are to be taken down to be called as witnesses before the court-martial. Can you inform me how long we shall be kept there?"

"I am sorry I cannot, as I do not know," was the Colonel's courteous reply.

"Excuse the liberty I took," continued Pipe-en-Bois, drawing together his overcoat; "it was only to know what linen would be required."

Grotesque!

The Commune was also sublime. A prisoner, a man, had been captured with arms in his hands, was imprisoned and condemned to death. His wife made heroic efforts to save him, and succeeded in securing the sympathy of a man who had influence in those times. Her husband was saved from capital punishment, and was condemned to transportation. Left alone and abandoned, without resources, she had formed an intimacy with the man who had saved her husband. After living for years with this lover, to whom she was deeply attached, she

besought him to apply for a pardon for her husband. Although he felt that he was destroying her happiness and his own, he did so. The husband returned full of love for the wife who had saved him from execution and procured his liberation. On the way home, however, he learned the truth. He changed his name, disappeared, and lived in hiding for many years. Then, when divorce became possible in France, he wrote to his wife: "Apply for a divorce from me; I will do all I can to secure one for you. Marry him and be happy."

Sublime!

Oliphant wrote admirable letters on this visit, in which he gave a most accurate description of what he saw, and they produced a great impression. The *Times* then asked permission to send Mr. Charles Austin, a clever and humorous writer, to the fortified prisons in the south of France as special correspondent, and his communications to the paper completely rectified the wrong impressions that had prevailed with respect to the treatment of the French political prisoners.

It was just at the time when my new occupation had the greatest charm for me that Mr. Hardman returned to his duties. It was a hard blow for me to bear.

M. Thiers thought of applying on my behalf to the *Times*. He was now accustomed to my visits. I was one of the political elements which gravitated around him. He was unwilling that any change should be made. Oliphant, however, objected to his intervention. He said it would be a sure way of losing all chance of admission on the staff of the paper. M. Thiers accordingly abandoned his scheme.

Riga, this eternal phantom of the snowy North, came

once more to the front. This time M. Thiers promised formally to hand me my letter of appointment within eight days. Riga! It appeared to me now a place of exile.

I had drunk too deeply of the sweets of a life the very struggles of which were full of delight. I clung to it. I made some advances to the Paris newspapers. I soon felt that to become a French journalist, talent, even if one has it, does not suffice. Many other qualities are necessary, and these I did not possess. Extreme suppleness, readiness in understanding the public taste and in conforming to it, are indispensable in a French editor. He must possess, besides, the art of repelling a public adversary by alarming the individual, skill to command influence by asserting the possession of it, a natural way of using the editorial "we" without a smile, a perfection of style which throws into the shade the interest of the facts and the skill with which they are grouped, a brilliancy of detail which dazzles and distracts attention, something which is at once aggressive, bold and skeptical. All these gifts the French newspaperman possesses instinctively, and brings them to perfection by living in a special milieu. I felt that I was destitute of all these qualifications, without which no one can reach an eminent position on the French press. Sadly, then, I determined on the course I should take. I resolved to see M. Thiers in the course of the day, and to remind him of the letter of appointment he had formally promised to obtain for me.

Breakfast was just over when suddenly Oliphant made his appearance. He had a telegram in his hand.

"Hardman," he said, "was called back the day

before yesterday. He will not return to Paris. I telegraphed yesterday to the *Times*, and I have this moment received a reply. A proposal is made to give you a permanent appointment. If you accept, you will remain in the meantime with me; and the other matters can easily be arranged."

My satisfaction was so apparent that I had no need to reply. I set out for Versailles, where I announced to M. Thiers that Mr. Hardman had again left, and that I was once more to take his place. He told me my appointment to Riga was ready, and that he would delay its announcement till he heard from me again, for I did not inform him that I was permanently engaged by the *Times*.

I must confess that for a long time I concealed the fact from him, and that frequently, by asking for my appointment to Riga, I overcame the difficulties that arose between him and me. When he became aware of the truth, he, in turn, said nothing of it to me, but I felt that "Riga" was of no more use. Fortunately at this time I had multiplied my sources of information. The intercourse between M. Thiers and me was at times less cordial, for I had to give news which embarrassed him, instead of the one-sided information which he communicated to me to help his policy.

Here is an instance.

One evening M. Thiers, who had by this time taken up his abode at the Elysée, had a private reception. M. Timachief, the Russian Minister, was for a short time in earnest conversation with him. The President was evidently annoyed. I went to another part of the room not to overhear what was said. As I was leaving M. Thiers said to me:

"The Russian Minister congratulated me yesterday morning on the discipline I have introduced into the Republican party. He said the European monarchic governments were much impressed by it."

I did not for a moment call in question the accuracy of the statement, but it was in no respect consistent with the attitude of the two speakers I had seen in conversation. I accordingly resolved to wait a little before writing on the subject. As it happened, on making my way out of the palace I overtook Count ——, the Prefect of one of the chief French departments, who had stopped at the gate and was busy writing notes in the light of the gas lamp. I went up to him. I said:

"My dear Prefect, the detectives will take us into custody. They will think you are making plans of the palace to carry out some plot."

"Their imagination will bring them no reward," he said; "I was simply taking a note of some remarks made by M. Thiers, whom I found very indignant, and on what I consider very good grounds, too. It appears that M. Timachief, the Russian Minister, used strong language in speaking to him this evening about the revolutionary speech made at Romans by Gambetta, which he said would spread alarm in the European monarchies."

After a moment's reflection he added, "I think it would be a service to everybody if you were to mention the fact."

I remained with him for a few minutes, talking of general subjects; but on leaving I lost no time in writing that M. Timachief, after having congratulated M. Thiers on the discipline he had introduced into the Republican party, had on the following night—that on which I

wrote—protested strongly against the disquieting attitude it had assumed.

I am going, for the benefit of younger journalists, to give a hint which a good many of them whom I know would do well to bear in mind. When a man gives a correspondent an important piece of news, the latter should continue to remain with him for some time, but change the conversation, and not leave him until it has turned to something quite insignificant. If the correspondent takes his departure abruptly, a flash of caution will burst upon his informant. He will reflect rapidly, and will beg the journalist not to repeat what he has said till he sees him again. The information would be lost, and the correspondent would suffer annoyance that might have been avoided if he had heard nothing. A newspaper has no use for confidential communications it cannot transmit to its readers.

Taking this view, I published my double information. An explosion followed. The Conservatives were delighted and set M. Thiers at defiance. Prince Orloff was irritated. M. Thiers was very exasperated, and he went so far as to say to me:

"I never spoke of that to any one. You should have communicated with me before repeating what had been only partially told you." He thought I had overheard his conversation with M. Timachief.

I was indignant. I gave way to one of those fits of nervous excitement which at times will master us. And in a loud voice I replied: "The ruler of a State commits a great imprudence when he receives a journalist who can repeat aloud what is told him in a whisper," and I burst out of the room furiously.

Three weeks afterward I met M. Thiers in the Galerie des Tombeaux. He came up to me smiling. "You are certainly a good journalist," he said; "but your nerves are so highly strung that I shall never think of making you an ambassador." Then he asked me to call on him, as he had an interesting piece of news to give me. Peace was restored between us.

This is a sufficient illustration of the difficulty a newspaper correspondent has in both serving his friends and telling the truth. It is prudent for him to accept no favour which can give those who bestow it a right or claim to control him.

A short time after I had officially entered on my duties as a *Times* correspondent, Mr. Oliphant took a holiday, and, with the approval of the newspaper, entrusted me with the non-telegraphic correspondence. I was delighted to see my first letter copied into the newspapers of every country. I had the same satisfaction in 1872, when I gave an account of my interview at Antwerp with the Count de Chambord.

Not long afterward a lucky accident secured for me the approbation and good-will of Mr. John Delane, who for thirty-two years was editor of the *Times*, and who, I need scarcely say, was the most competent judge of the merits of a journalist, and the honour and glory of the profession.

In the year referred to Mr. Delane came to Paris, and I then saw him for the first time. I accompanied him to Versailles, and we were present at a sitting of the Chamber, which was entirely taken up by an admirable speech by M. Thiers, delivered amidst the greatest excitement. We returned together to Paris, and the same

night Mr. Delane left for London. It was toward the end of April, and I went with him to the station. At that time there was no proper arrangement for the publication in Paris of the debates at Versailles. The summary appeared very late, and the report of the proceedings given by the *Soir* could not be had in Paris in time to be made use of by us.

"What a pity," said Mr. Delane, on leaving me, "that things are so badly organised! If we could have given that speech from one end to the other in to-morrow's paper, what a glorious thing it would have been!"

When he had left, a wild idea came into my head. Following the old habit which I still retain, I sat down and shut my eyes. I then strove to call up the image of the Assembly, with M. Thiers in the rostrum, and as I had listened very attentively to what he had said, it seemed as if I could hear him speaking, and that I could write down his speech.

I went at once to the telegraph office in the Rue de Grenelle. I obtained writing materials in an empty room. There I put into operation my mnemonic process. Alternately I shut my eyes to see and hear M. Thiers and opened them to write out the speech for the wire. I was able to recall and report all his speech, which was of course instantaneously transmitted to London. When Mr. Delane, next morning, opened the *Times*, in England, he found in it two columns and a half, reporting the speech he had heard on the previous afternoon at Versailles.

The direct wire which the *Times* obtained two years afterward—in May, 1874—and which has now been so generally imitated, was the result of the effort I made

on this occasion to outstrip the Paris journalists in reporting their own news.

Mr. Oliphant, as I told my readers, had come to Europe from America in compliance with orders he had received from the founder of a sect whom he spoke of as "the prophet Harris." He had for years led a troubled life in London. His countrymen had been both amused and scandalized by the publication of a satirical sheet, the *Owl*.

He was beginning to reflect on the vanity of a life leading to nothing great or noble, when he made the acquaintance of Mr. Harris, who was looking out in Europe for converts and recruits to join a colony they had founded in the United States. His doctrine soon took a firm hold of the imagination of Oliphant, who recognised "the prophet" as one whom it was his duty to serve and obey. In proof of this, he submitted to the hardest and meanest work. Thus, as a labourer, he drove carts filled with manure, for the new colony—the "Brethren of the New Life."

Harris sent Oliphant back to Europe on the outbreak of the Franco-German war, and it was then he entered the employment of the *Times*, at first as a special war correspondent and afterward as chief Paris representative of the paper. He had married a charming wife, whom he easily converted to the new faith; she, in fact, accepted her husband's teaching with the docility of a loving heart, blind to the errors of the apostle. From the commencement of our official intercourse I had taken special care to make known to my colleague my religious opinions, in order to avert any controversy or misunderstanding between us.

The first time he began to explain his doctrines I interrupted him.

"Excuse me," I said, "I think we ought to settle once for all this question of proselytism which might cause differences between us. I cannot accept the views of your prophet, which are based on pride. He has proved to you that you are greater than other men because you have submitted to drive a dust-cart. I prefer the word of Christ, who taught us not to consider ourselves greater or better than other men, because we are dust ourselves. Humanity oscillates between atheism, which rejects reason, and reason, which bows to faith. Those who would substitute the everlasting harmony of the world by successive aggregations arising out of chaos in fulfilment of an unconscious and sublime order, claim a greater effort from me than those who ask me to believe in one God and in the doctrine of the Trinity. When I have admitted that God created the world, I have expressed a belief, certainly, which makes revealed religions appear infinitely less miraculous and a thousandfold more acceptable than the theory of spontaneous creation and automatic development. That from the midst of the people of God, trodden under the hoof of the pagan conqueror in the corrupt Græco-Roman world, there should have arisen a prophet who, instead of hatred and revolution, preached charity, forgiveness, brotherly love and good-will toward all men, was itself a greater miracle than any of those attributed to Christ during his sojourn on earth. Unless you can teach me a religion which inculcates precepts more sublime than those of the divine philosopher of Nazareth, which your prophet does not do, leave me my faith without seeking to trouble

it. You may make an unhappy man, but you will not make a disciple."

Oliphant did not reply. He was perhaps pleased that I had spoken with so much sincerity, and the subject was never again referred to.

CHAPTER III

A Champagne Conspiracy

On the 31st of July, 1872, Count de Kératry, who was then Prefect of the Department of Bouches-du-Rhône, came to Versailles. His object was to induce M. Thiers to bring to the notice of the National Assembly the serious contention which existed between himself and the Mayor of Marseilles. M. Thiers received him most kindly, listened to what he had to say, and, by way of reply, invited him to luncheon. At table he was most attentive to his guest, paying him all the honours due to his position as head official of one of the largest Prefectures of France. He offered him the seat to the right of Madame Thiers, facing himself. This strict observance of etiquette was, at the same time, a clever piece of strategy, for M. Thiers had given M. de Kératry the only place at table from which it was impossible for him to discuss with his host the question about which he had come. M. de Kératry understood this, and immediately after luncheon, as M. Thiers appeared to be greatly pressed for time, he took leave of him and we left the house together.

"He was afraid," said M. de Kératry, "that I should compel him to delay the prorogation of the National Assembly."

That was quite true. M. Thiers was leaving the following day for Trouville, where he was to spend a few

weeks. The National Assembly was to cease work that very afternoon and take its vacation.

The idea of this visit to Trouville delighted M. Thiers and he was as excited as a child about it, for, thanks to his chubby appearance, short and stout as he was, his exhibitions of joy or anger were apt to appear childlike.

He had taken the Cordier Chalet at Trouville. Everything was arranged; all preparations had been completed, and part of the presidential household already installed in the chalet, expecting to receive its master at any moment. The train in which M. Thiers was to travel was waiting in the Versailles station ready to start. The various localities where the presidential train was to stop had been advised of the hour and of the length of time the train would remain there. In short, all the preliminaries which are necessary for an official and, one might almost say, a triumphal voyage had been arranged, and M. Thiers was in a state of joyful impatience which made the idea of any delay in his departure unbearable.

Count de Kératry gained nothing by his journey. The National Assembly was prorogued, and M. Thiers was free to start.

The departure was fixed for the first of August, at an early hour in the morning.

At Versailles the silence which had followed the departure of the National Assembly was broken by unusual animation. A somewhat large group had gathered in front of the gates of the Prefecture, where open carriages awaited the Chief of the State, whilst his civil and military household, in full uniform, were in the courtyard. The sun was radiant—less radiant, though,

than M. Thiers himself when, dressed in black, with his frock-coat buttoned, tight-fitting gloves and a gray hat, he came down into the courtyard, accompanied by Madame Thiers and Mademoiselle Dosne.

Colonel Lambert, Captain Fayet and Lieutenant de Salignac-Fenélon, drawn up in a line, gave the military salute, with a smile on their lips. They, with M. Leroux and M. Andrieux, chief secretaries and their assistants, walking bareheaded, formed the retinue which was to accompany the President to Trouville.

The little crowd gave a few confused shouts when the carriages, at a slow, measured pace, passed through the gates in the direction of the station.

As they proceeded, quite a number of people raised their hats respectfully. The travellers formed a line, the Democrats remaining bareheaded and the Reactionists keeping their hats on and holding their heads up in a defiant way. The station was decorated, and a railway inspector preceded M. Thiers to the carriage reserved for him, and remained at his orders until he arrived at his destination. It was the departure of a sovereign, without his state dress, travelling incognito.

The train left by a side line, joining the main line I do not remember where, and on the platform of the first station at which it stopped we saw a stout man appear, with a red face, wearing the tri-coloured sash. He placed himself in front of M. Thiers with several other men round him, all of whom had very red faces. He then took out a paper and proceeded to read, but his slow, monotonous voice did not reach our ears.

M. Thiers, who had turned his back on us, bowed several times, raised his hat slightly and then, with

quick, graceful gestures, replied in his clear, refined voice, and every one applauded. There were a few shouts heard, which were taken up by the crowd that had gathered outside the station alongside the railings of the platform. M. Thiers continued talking for a few minutes. He made inquiries about the needs and wishes of the little town, but he stopped the Mayor in his enumeration and took his leave just as the poor man, with his arm in the air, was continuing the list of all the wants and requirements of this particular part of the country. We could see nothing of M. Thiers but his back, but he must have been delighted, for positively his very back was laughing heartily. The President, leaving the Mayor rather surprised at the unexpected way in which the interview ended, went back to his compartment, and we set off once more on our journey. At Trouville, the station was very nicely decorated. Carriages were waiting for M. Thiers in the courtyard where there was a rather large crowd, which included the Mayor and the members of the Municipal Council. The Mayor was a man well known to M. Thiers and to all of us, and his little speech sounded very well.

The President and suite drove through the town, which had been decorated here and there, to the Cordier Chalet. He was greeted cordially by the population, whilst from the top of the Honfleur road, behind the Hotel des Roches-Noires, could be heard the firing of a cannon. It was merely by chance, and was rather ironical, as it had not been intended in honour of the President's arrival. This incident provided members of the opposition, who happened to be promenading on the famous planks, with an excellent subject for endless jokes.

M. Thiers was soon installed, without much ceremony, in the Cordier Chalet. But on the day following his arrival it was evident that Trouville was inhabited by some one of note, and that the seaside resort had become a centre of importance. The trains brought visitors, whose appearance attracted attention. A whole troop of individuals who had favours to ask swooped down on the beach. Men, who were either imperious or ruined and desperate, came to beg for themselves, for their cousins, their friends or their sons, prefectures, sub-prefectures, consulates or tax collectorships, or other government appointments of all kinds and of all classes. Women, outrageously made up, pushed forward into the front row as the old President passed by, and when once there, with their enticing looks, they endeavoured to bombard with their eyes the dispenser of the favours they hoped to obtain.

They were all of them convinced that M. Thiers could do anything he wished, and that a smile from him meant, for them, at least six thousand francs a year.

It seemed as though the hour for sharing the spoils had come. The Empire in its fall had left behind the widows of the Budget and the orphans of the Civil List. The eighteen years of its reign had sharpened the teeth of those who had only seen the feast at a distance, and all those of yesterday, and those of to-day, were asking for their share of the taxpayers' flesh.

Besides these ordinary, starving creatures "who walked the planks," as the saying was at Trouville at the time, there were also certain persons in a higher position, who were more interesting and better qualified to get situations. Then there were Ambassadors, Members of the

Assembly, Ministers of yesterday and of to-morrow, financiers both sound and unsound, exotic visitors, women merely elegant or titled who wanted to see the celebrities of the day and be able to tell, *de visu*, anything that would be of interest at their receptions or at their dinner-parties, foreign statesmen who suddenly felt the need of visiting the seaside resorts of Normandy, a crowd that came from all parts, a pack of human cards which chance, or political or social strategy, mixed together—all these flocked round M. Thiers. The *salon* of the Cordier Chalet, more often than not, contained the rarest mixture of people, and as finally every one felt at liberty to speak freely, nothing was more lively, more piquant and more suggestive than these *soirées* of the Trouville Court, during which the President was sometimes dozing peacefully in his arm-chair in the midst of a gentle hum of voices murmuring around him.

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The firing or testing of the Reffye cannon on the top of the Honfleur road was at the time one of the pastimes of this seaside resort. A rough enclosure had been erected on the plateau and soldiers were stationed there. A few cannons, without any horses, but with men and ammunition, had been placed there.

The French flag waved from the top of a pole. A few artillerymen mounted guard most solemnly and a crowd of curious and well-dressed people were always loitering there.

M. Thiers, nearly every day, after luncheon, went up to the plateau attended by his military suite.

The soldiers shouldered arms. The artillery officers grouped themselves round him, by the side of the three

officers of his household. A few foreign military *attachés* walked up the hill and were present at the experiments. In the distance, on the moving water, an old black barge, pierced with holes like a battle-flag, tossing and rocking about, served as a target. M. Thiers, with his gray hat pushed slightly back, his big field-glass up to his eyes, his frock-coat buttoned, and sometimes affecting the traditional pose of Napoleon, watched the balls fly through the air, saw when they struck, and waved his hat enthusiastically when a straight shot shook the barge, made it dance about, and hollowed out a gaping hole in its already perforated hulk.

The crowd applauded. M. Thiers raised his hat again, congratulated the artillerymen who had pointed the gun and those who had fired and then rejoined Madame Thiers and Mademoiselle Dosne, and, followed by an imposing procession, continued his daily promenade along the sandy road. From the balcony, where I was, I could see him, lifting his gray hat incessantly, whilst, as he passed, the men all took off their hats, and the *vieille garde*, in brilliant colours, stood aside or bowed like a cornfield ravaged by the hail and interspersed with daisies, corn-flowers and poppies.

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My stay at Trouville had already extended beyond the time which had been allotted me. M. Thiers seemed annoyed whenever I spoke of returning to Paris, and I began to wonder how I should manage to escape, when, on the 13th of August, in the afternoon, I was told that the President, whom I had seen in the morning, had just started for Paris. One of his secretaries informed me that he had been recalled suddenly to preside at a

Council which was to meet on the morrow, and after which he would return to Trouville. The following day, although I had no council whatever at which to preside, I took the same route as the President and returned to Paris.

It was with a great sense of comfort and relief that I entered my own home once more, closing the doors to all that went on in the outside world, and giving orders that neither letters nor newspapers should be brought to me. For the last twenty-five years this has been my method of obtaining absolute rest. On the 15th, however, in the evening, in spite of my strict orders, the outside world did succeed in penetrating into my house in the form of an official despatch.

"Come back as soon as possible. You are impatiently awaited."

The despatch, on yellow paper, was signed by one of M. Thiers's secretaries. That was the end of my short rest.

I felt very sad. I took the first train the next day and had a compartment to myself. I did not open a newspaper, and went straight from the station to the Cordier Chalet.

The very moment I arrived I was struck by the unusual attitude of things. At the gateway quite a number of soldiers and policemen had been stationed. On entering every one was examined with visible distrust, and although I was well known, I had to undergo a sort of progressive inspection before crossing the first threshold. From the gates to the chalet the most extraordinary precautions appeared to have been taken. There were

patrols, or men who seemed to be acting as such, walking along the paths, and through the leaves of the summer arbours I could see the disciples of "Saint Detective," dressed like well-to-do citizens of the suburbs of Paris, promenading about warily and watching over the welfare of the State. The man servant on duty introduced me without even announcing me. I was expected. M. Thiers was alone in the large drawing-room, the principal door of which, leading on to a flight of stone steps, was open to the sunshine. He rose quickly and shook hands with me.

"Well, what do you think of it?" he asked.

"To what are you referring, Monsieur le Président?" I answered.

"To what am I referring? Have you been asleep for the last twenty-four hours?"

The reproach was well deserved, for I had been asleep for the last forty-eight hours. I could only bow in silence.

"Well, now," continued M. Thiers laughing, "you are a well-informed correspondent! Is it possible that you have not heard about the conspiracy, of which I came very near being the victim yesterday afternoon?"

"No, really I have not," I answered. "I was taking my holiday, and as my work consists in knowing everything, my holiday consists in not knowing anything."

"Oh, well," continued M. Thiers in his low, hissing voice, "yesterday being the 15th of August, the Emperor's birthday, a band of conspirators in a Russian boat approached the shore and as they fired their cannons they shouted: 'Long live the Emperor,' just at the time when I am accustomed to rest on the terrace of the

Roches-Noires. They went toward the Hotel des Roches-Noires, in front of which some harmless-looking little boats were tacking about near the shore, whilst the big boat had gone back to the high sea and was also tacking. The plan was to get hold of me and carry me off to the ship. You see at once the consequences. The Assembly is having its vacation. There is no doubt a watchword had been agreed upon, and accomplices were waiting from one end of France to the other for the news that I was captured. They would then have brought about a general rising; the Emperor would have landed on a certain point of the coast, and they would have endeavoured to restore the Empire. I have not yet the list of all the conspirators, but I know the two principal ones. First and foremost is M. Gunsbourg, the owner of the Russian boat. Oh, as for him, he can set his mind at rest! Orloff came at once and declared that he would have Gunsbourg recalled and his boat burned. The other is M. Bertrand de Valon, son of the Countess de Valon, whom I saw only a few days ago. I promised her that I would do something for her son, not knowing that he was a Bonapartist. I shall send them both to the Assize Court, where they will have to answer the charge of armed conspiracy."

I was simply dumfounded on hearing this story. How could I have had the bad luck not to know anything about so serious a matter! How was it that I, after accompanying M. Thiers to Trouville and for a fortnight keeping my readers well-informed with regard to his doings and movements—how was it that I, who, to use an expression which he had so good-naturedly applied to me, had constituted myself his "affectionate historiographer," how could I have allowed such an event to happen without

even mentioning it? By the expression of my face M. Thiers could read my thoughts. He looked at me over his spectacles and came close up to me, as he was accustomed to do when he wanted to penetrate any one's inner reflections.

"We'll make up for all this," he said; "I'm delighted that you have not yet written anything about it. You have not, as they say, taken up your position yet."

He then gave me the details, and begged me to read the letter to him which I was to send to my paper that same night. It was the first time he had ever asked me such a thing, and when I left him I was somewhat vexed at his request. I made no promise about the matter. On entering the Roches-Noires, I found M. Gunsbourg very much abashed. Every one was aware that I had just returned and that I had seen M. Thiers. Trouville is too small a place for that not to have been known. It was rumoured on all sides that I had gone direct to the Cordier Chalet, and that I had just come from there, after a conversation of an hour and a half, and about twenty persons, among whom was M. Gunsbourg, gathered around me.

At Trouville, the population had been apprised of M. Thiers's anger, and was eager to hear what terrible decisions the indignant old man had taken. I refused to reply to any question; I sent for M. Gunsbourg and asked him to come to the rooms on the ground floor which had been reserved for me.

Never shall I forget the look of consternation on the young man's face when I questioned him about the plot in which he had taken so active a part. Recovering at last from his surprise, and understanding that M.

Thiers was mistaken and that people had deceived him or that he had wanted to be deceived, with an accent of truth which could not be doubted, and taking the whole town as witness, he told me the story of what had really taken place.

He had come to Trouville in his yacht and was sailing round the coasts of the English Channel. On the morning of the fifteenth of August he had started with some of his friends, among whom was M. Bertrand de Valon, with the idea of having a sail and a lunch out at sea. They had a good meal, drank copiously, and on approaching the shore they remembered, in spite of the effect of the champagne, that the fifteenth of August was the Emperor's birthday, and so, in the midst of the noise of corks flying out of the bottles and the firing of the parade cannon loaded with powder, to which one of them had set a light, they all began in their liveliness and folly to shout, "Long live the Emperor."

The crowd understood the incident and roared with laughter at them. The police had endeavoured to capture them, but the crowd, very naturally, had taken their part. There had been a great commotion, and the conspirators, sobered down and rather ashamed of themselves, had disappeared, whilst an action had been commenced against the owner of the yacht and against M. Bertrand de Valon, who had remained with him. M. Gunsbourg, in the name of his comrades, begged me to explain to M. Thiers how the affair had come about, to express to him the regret that these young madcaps now felt, and to add that they were themselves prepared to apologise to him. As soon as M. Gunsbourg had gone I sent for the Paris evening papers of the fifteenth

and the morning papers of the sixteenth, which I had not read (all the above had taken place on the fifteenth), and I proceeded to read them. They varied in tone, style and in the version they gave, according to the political opinion of the paper or according to the temperament of the reporter. By reading all these stories and comparing all the information I obtained elsewhere, it was quite clear to me that the event had been exaggerated beyond measure, and that, if the young men implicated were far from being quite innocent, they were also far from being really guilty.

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Toward the end of dinner that evening M. Thiers asked me, quietly, if my letter were written. I replied that, as it would have been too late for the post that day, I had postponed it for the next morning; that there would be no time lost, as I was not going to give the items of news, but was going to explain and comment on the event; and I asked him to discuss the subject again with me.

But as soon as I endeavoured to attenuate the nature and the significance of the incident, M. Thiers grew angry and looked at me distrustfully. He was still furious, or he pretended to be so.

As a matter of fact, people abroad understood what had happened, and the Countess de Valon summed up the general opinion in a letter she wrote to me a few days later:

"These young men," she said, "had lunched rather too festively out at sea, and, like so many big children, they had played at the landing of the Emperor—seven of them! It was more like a charade than anything

else. That is my explanation of their freak, and that is how it has been understood abroad. M. Thiers has too much common sense, and is too wise, to give to this piece of child's play more importance than it deserves. No doubt certain zealous officials thought they were serving or flattering M. Thiers by magnifying the incident, and at the same time they were able to take the credit of having saved him from danger."

I wrote my letter, which was a scathing one. An attorney for the Republic entrusted with the case would have signed it with both hands. I read it to M. Thiers, who was delighted with it. He even asked me to soften down a few sentences. As it was then the seventeenth and the news was growing stale, he called my attention to the fact that the letter would only reach London on the eighteenth, and that on account of Sunday it would only be published on the twentieth. I replied that it would go that night by wire, and that very night the telegraph communicated the original to the office.

Is there any need for me to add that the letter was never intended to appear and that it never did appear! My newspaper had been informed on the morning of the seventeenth of what had happened, of what was then happening, and what would happen.

But thanks to the letter which I had read to him, M. Thiers was greatly appeased with regard to the conspirators. He even allowed me to say that my statement of the case had been harsher than the gravity of the event warranted.

An inquiry was instituted. It was dragged on for a long time, some extraordinary attenuations being given to the

first reports. M. Thiers himself now came over to my opinion and thought that my letter had perhaps gone too far. For several days he asked for the *Times*. His secretaries, whom I had warned, invented various pretexts for explaining the absence of the paper, which was never to be found; it was always being mislaid. After three or four days M. Thiers appeared to have forgotten about it, but at the end of the week, as I was going away, one evening he said to me with a sly look:

"Did you pay for that wire?"

"No, Monsieur le Président," I answered, "my paper paid for it."

M. Thiers came nearer and looked at me over his spectacles:

"Did you know that it would not appear?"

"The paper was free to publish it, Monsieur le Président."

"Ah—well, that was money very wisely thrown away. I don't regret it." And then after a minute he added: "They no doubt thought as I did, that your letter was too severe——"

. . . . . .

A fortnight later the conspirators were summoned to appear before the court at Pont-l'Evêque. They were each sentenced to pay a fine of sixteen francs for disturbance of the peace. But M. Thiers had received letters, messages and telegrams from all parts of the world and he was delighted. He knew that in order to be truly a cousin of

kings it is necessary to inspire the people who are fortunate enough to be living under your reign with the violent desire of ridding themselves at any price of your presence.

CHAPTER IV

Alphonso XII. Proclaimed King of Spain

It was only in October, 1872, if I remember rightly—for his letter bears no date—that Laurence Oliphant informed me that he had just heard from Mr. Mowbray Morris, then manager of the *Times*, whose duty it was to appoint the correspondents of the paper and their assistants, to the effect that I was to remain definitely under his orders, Mr. Charles Austin continuing to be attached to the Paris office as second correspondent.

Soon after, Laurence proposed that I should take up my abode with his mother and himself, who lived in a small house with court and garden in the Rue du Centre, now the Rue Lamenais. Oliphant and his mother lived on the first floor; my wife, my adopted daughter and I occupied the second floor. The upper stories, as well as the dining-room on the ground floor, were common to us both. We took our meals together, my wife having charge of all the domestic arrangements. The anxieties and practical difficulties attendant upon the management of a double household of this sort were beyond the power of Mrs. Oliphant. Like so many English ladies who have spent much time in the colonies, she had always been in the habit of shifting the responsibility of domestic and household worries upon others and upon her servants.

We met every day at meals, at noon and at seven o'clock. In the morning I went to Versailles, which

was then the centre of political information. At the luncheon hour I was back in Paris, when we discussed the information that I had gathered, considering it from the point of view of its value for our correspondence. In the evening I sent, under the signature of Oliphant, who had relieved me of the duty of communicating them to him in advance, all those items of news which would have grown stale if consigned to the tardy post, and which, owing to the lateness of their reaching me, I was unable to communicate to my chief.

Oliphant, as I have said before, had come to Europe and France by order of Mr. Harris, who still continued to be a prophet, or rather his prophet. Harris had not told him why he was to come to Europe; he had merely told him to come. Was it that the Prophet did not himself know?

In any case, as long as Oliphant had to describe to the readers of the *Times* the agitated life of camps with the fever of revolutions and the thousand crises that attended the painful situation in France during the war and the Revolution, he proved himself to be a marvellous correspondent; but when the country, apparently exhausted, crushed and scorched under fire and war, attempted with extraordinary elasticity to raise itself from the ruins and walk again with head erect among the nations, Laurence Oliphant felt himself, as it were, humiliated at having to do the work of a peaceful and faithful historian, which was now incumbent upon him.

His relations with the *Times*, therefore, became now more and more irksome, and it was only by a strong effort that he succeeded in fulfilling his daily task. His attitude toward the Thiers Government was an

indication of his state of mind at this time. He always refused to go to Versailles to see M. Thiers, and when he did see him he was irritated and almost haughty, and treated the opinions and theories of M. Thiers with a kind of ironical and supercilious indulgence very much like disdain. He refused the offer of the Legion of Honour almost rudely, as though the Red Rosette were intended as a badge of servitude. His young wife, whose aspirations were more elevated than his, perhaps, and more romantic, could not be satisfied by this daily task, a little too exactingly regular, so that she was not likely to induce him to love it any the more. He threw the bridle upon my neck, approved in advance of all my communications, and received them rather with the pleasure of a reader than with the attention of a correspondent called upon to render them public. These tendencies were often prejudicial to the best exercise of his abilities, and clearly presaged the end.

I was not surprised, therefore, when, in the year 1873, he announced to me one day that as a result of some rather sharp correspondence between Mr. Macdonald, then manager of the *Times*, and himself, he had just sent in his resignation as special correspondent of that paper in France.

Some days later he introduced me to his successor. It was Mr. Frederic Hardman, whom I had succeeded at the start and replaced afterward. It did not take long for me to understand, and undoubtedly Mr. Hardman understood also, that we should have many difficulties in our intercourse.

Mr. Frederic Hardman was a veteran among *Times* correspondents. His position, his great loyalty, the

uprightness of his character, his devotion to the cause of the paper, and his fine talent and great experience had won for him the friendship of his chiefs and of all connected with the *Times*. He had lived for a long period in Spain, and he had very accurate notions in regard to that country and its political parties, then so eagerly wrangling among themselves. He had lived in Rome and in Germany as well; he knew many statesmen in all countries, and he was on the best of terms with men of the old régime in France.

But the new political structure and the men who were at this moment governing France were unknown to him. He did not see that defeat had produced in every one a nervous condition, a kind of chronic distrust, something bitter in the feelings toward foreigners and everything foreign.

His first attempts to seek information and to put together some elements of work were not a success, and he generally summed up the result with a "There is nothing new." He had, besides, the American method. He took down the words that were said to him in a note-book which he held in his hand, a method which in France is infallible for learning absolutely nothing; for, as M. Duclerc said, "This method of cross-examination puts you immediately on the defensive, and shuts your mouth while it opens your eyes."

After some days' trial he explained to me that he was anxious to arrange our work as I had done before with Oliphant; that I was to go in search of information, and that he would make my results the theme of correspondence. He left me also the department of the preparation of rapid news necessitating short despatches.

This plan worked well for some time. Unfortunately the situation was false. He was my chief, but he was unknown to the majority of Frenchmen, and whenever we found ourselves together in the same *salon*, in spite of all precautions that I took, the positions, in the eyes of a third person, seemed inverted. Some incidents, unfortunate, but inevitable, complicated matters. Once he went to the Elysée, handing his card to the usher, in order to speak to Viscount d'Harcourt, the President's secretary. The usher replied that M. d'Harcourt could not be seen.

"Tell him that it is the correspondent of the *Times* who wishes to see him."

The usher looked at him rudely: "Pardon me," he said, "but the correspondent of the *Times* has just left the Secretary."

On another occasion one of his friends, Lord X——, left a visiting card at the Hotel Chatham, to be sent to the correspondent of the *Times*. It was taken to my house. As it constantly happens for one to receive cards from unknown persons, I thought that this card was meant for me, and I returned the visit.

The crisis after these incidents became acute. I had arranged, at Mr. Macdonald's order, the special wire to the *Times*, which was the first then established, and which was used for the first time on May 4, 1874.

Mr. Hardman, without any experience in that kind of work, was obliged to adapt himself to this most exacting method of improvising upon the most recent events that were in progress as one wrote an account of them. Letters logically conceived throughout had to be written while the telegraph waited, without opportunity for revision.

This had a baneful effect; the strain affected the health, temper and nervous system of Mr. Hardman, and made collaboration with him impossible. Four times did pressing telegraphic recalls to Paris interrupt my holidays, and finally, when I was summoned thither a fifth time, after an absence of only three days, I returned obediently, but resolved to send in my resignation, which now seemed inevitable.

I had neither the wish nor the power to act otherwise, and so once more I was on the point, notwithstanding that I had reached an advanced time of life, of abandoning a career for which I had so sincere an enthusiasm and to which I had dreamed of devoting the remainder of my existence. But on reaching Paris I learned that Mr. Hardman was seriously ill.

He was then living across the river in the Rue Solferino. It was his habit, after the nervous excitement of his work, to return on foot to his house always at a late hour of the night—sometimes, indeed, in the early morning, thus courting the illness which was destined to carry him away. It was pleurisy, contracted during his walk, on coming out from his work in a state of perspiration into the icy air, which finally, after a few days of resistance, proved fatal. In every sense of the word, he was upright and devoted to his duty, and he died from having heroically undertaken something beyond his strength. It was neither our characters nor our sympathies nor our wills that made our intercourse so difficult—nay, I may say all but impossible—but it was the falsity of the position in which we happened to be placed. None of my friends who knew me well were surprised to see me weeping sincerely at the premature death of this

excellent man. The *Times* devoted to him an eloquent article, full of kind sentiment, which, notwithstanding its notes of eulogy, scarcely did him justice, and then—all was over.

There is nothing in the world more melancholy than the sudden silence that falls round the tomb of those painstaking, steady workers who follow with unwearying conscientiousness up to the very end the furrow of their daily task, without arousing hatred, without provoking jealousy, and who leave at the last the memory of a talent to which every one pays equal homage. In the journalistic career posthumous enthusiasm is never noisy. Even beyond the tomb the fame of the dead is an offense, and the very haters seem to prefer to hold their peace, lest in attempting to gain satisfaction they revive the memory of the contestants who have disappeared.

Nothing is more melancholy than the startling rapidity with which these turbulent existences, linked in a merely ephemeral work, enter into the dark oblivion of the tomb. The most distinguished among them scarcely survive, and future generations know them not, because even living generations have passed them by in silence. The Royer Collards, the Benjamin Constants, the Thiers, have survived in the memory of men not because they were journalists, but in spite of it. Armand Carrel is not yet forgotten because he was killed in a duel with Girardin; and the latter, who was a man of business as well as a journalist, lives because he was the promoter of postal reform rather than because for forty years he had been the most active of journalists. Laurence Oliphant's life was written because he lived an existence full of agitation, because he was nearly massacred in Japan,

because he published books of satire and philosophy, because his ever-inquiring mind pursued, beyond the barriers of reality, the solution of problems that constantly escaped his insight and his power, and because in the solitude of Haifa, scaling in his turn Mount Carmel, he sought to preach from its heights a new law which he believed to be true.

But no one has dreamed, or dreams, so far as I know, of writing the life of that admirable journalist, John Delane, the editor of the *Times*. For thirty-two years he was the Moltke of a venerated chief, sacrificing to the triumph of the common work his right of remonstrance. Under the reign of Mr. John Walter, the third of the dynasty which gave to England the uncontested power of the *Times*, John Delane, for thirty-two years, without even leaving behind him memoirs which could recall his success, led his troops to continual victories. He began his fruitful career almost at the accession of Queen Victoria. He was editor-in-chief of the *Times* at the age at which Pitt became Prime Minister. At different epochs, and in the midst of dissimilar generations, these two—the one before the admiring gaze of the entire world, the other in the distant silence of the editorial room; the one amid the acclamations of the crowd, the other with only the approval of his conscience—worked with equally precocious qualities and displayed equal genius in the accomplishment of their varied tasks and in the steady realisation of their designs.

During John Delane's career the following events took place: The Revolution of 1848, the *coup d'état* of the second of December, the proclamation of the Second Empire, the Crimean War, the Italian War, the Mexican

Expedition, that against Schleswig-Holstein, and the war of 1866, the war of 1870, the Commune, the proclamation of the German Empire, the Dualism in Austria, the Russo-Hungarian campaign, the conception and the opening of the Suez Canal, the Nihilist plots, the great reforms that mark the internal policy of the reign of Queen Victoria, and a thousand others which for the moment I forget. Always and everywhere the dominant voice of his journal sounded far above the clamour of the combatants, and everywhere and always he lent to those to whom he gave his support a real power, while he weakened incontestably those against whom he fought. Yet when he died not a single voice in the world among his bitterest opponents was raised in disparagement of his conscientiousness, his justice and his honour. For thirty-two years he allowed nothing to prevent his going to his room in the *Times* at half-past ten in the evening and leaving it at half-past four. He gave his entire life to this silent work by night, subordinating to it everything save independence of judgment, and having as his only recompense the one single ambition to be true. During these thirty-two years he made and unmade hundreds of reputations which the world, by involuntary homage rendered to the infallibility of his judgment, has left in the place to which he assigned them. It has forgotten one thing, however—to reserve for John Delane a corner in its memory. It has forgotten that its duty was not to allow him to be so promptly submerged by events. It is almost with a feeling of bitterness that I have recalled the great career of this toiler, unknown among the crowd, and yet so worthy to figure among those who are placed in the front ranks of their times.

On the morning of the death of Mr. Hardman I received a very touching letter from Mr. Macdonald, who had loved him so much. He invited me to continue till further orders the duties of Paris correspondent of the paper, with the valuable collaboration of Mr. J. C. Alger, who very long occupied, with recognised ability, the same post. We set ourselves bravely to our task. They were difficult months that followed. My provisionary situation prevented my having the absolute authority that was necessary for my work. Furthermore, there was a question as to continuing the telegraphic correspondence, which was still an experiment, the success of which was watched everywhere with jealous anxiety.

The *Times* remained for some time the only paper in the world possessing a private wire, and it was necessary to justify this fact to its readers as well as to itself. We accomplished this result, however, for to-day the important papers without a special wire are the exception.

It was in the month of October that Mr. Hardman died. As soon as his death was known, on every side men from all countries and from all ranks, of the most varied talents, origin or position, applied for the post of Paris representative of the *Times*. At every moment the papers announced the appointment of one or the other, but never, I must say, was I mentioned for the post. The *Times* itself reserved to me a very curious surprise. Mr. John Delane was still the editor-in-chief. He knew me personally, but it was his rule never to write directly to correspondents, but only officially as the head of the staff. I had never had any direct personal correspondence with him.

While I was thus filling the vacant post in the interim,

I wrote one day a letter entitled "De Profundis," predicting the approaching fall of the De Cissy cabinet. The letter appeared with comment in a leading article, but the next day came a telegram from Mr. Delane asking who was the author of it. A similar thing happened four or five times, and I learned—which was, indeed, the inevitable consequence of anonymity—that the editor of the paper himself did not quite know what to think of my ability as a writer and a journalist.

Three months rolled by in this way. During those months a hundred rumours were bruited about, but not a word had been exchanged between the journal and myself in regard to my present or future situation. All that I knew was that, whosoever might be the head appointed over me, I could do nothing but withdraw. My experience with Mr. Hardman had enlightened me, and the position that I occupied after his death made a similar prospect still more intolerable. However, I did nothing to put an end to this state of things. I understood that the paper, in presence of the most tempting offers, knowing the difficulties that would attend my appointment, and realising the necessity of conducting itself according to a certain etiquette, as one might say, on account of its unique position in the world's press, would take a long time to consider. However great my annoyance might be, I was prepared to bow before its decision.

This decision came at the end of the year 1874. The service had not suffered. The special wire was proving its value more and more; the Paris correspondence, sustained by the combined efforts of my collaborator and myself, had succeeded in gaining the approbation of our chiefs. There appeared to be no reason why the situa-

tion, in itself provisional and precarious, should not be prolonged for some time still. But the 31st of December, 1874, ushered in an event which put a sudden end to the delay of my chiefs.

The evening of that day I had gone to bed very late. The day was icy cold; snow covered all Paris. Wearied out and suffering from a slight fever, I had remained in bed, and was on the point of sending to Mr. Alger, to inform him of my condition, in order to discuss with him what food we could supply to that Minotaur called the private wire, when the evening papers were brought to me. The *Liberté*, whose proprietors were then on excellent terms with the Spanish dynasty, announced by telegraph, and with some words of comment, that a *pronunciamento*, provoked by Martinez Campos, had taken place in Spain, and that the Prince of Asturias, then in Paris, had been proclaimed King under the title of Alphonso XII.

It was a veritable thunderclap.

Half an hour later I was at the Spanish Embassy, which, at the time, was under M. Abarzuzza, a revolutionary Spaniard of the first water and who was then walking in the flower-beds of diplomacy with, one might say, the easy lightness of an elephant. He received me very ironically, after I had waited for more than an hour—a thing not unnatural, however, as some three hundred people were pressing into his waiting-rooms. I had remained below in order to watch those who entered or departed by the only door admitting to the Embassy, and to see if the Ambassador received many telegrams from abroad. When a revolution breaks out in a country, as long as the Government remains master of the situation its repre-

sentatives are sure to receive ample information; for there is nothing more agreeable than preparing bulletins of victory. But as soon as the situation changes, it is the Ambassadors who send the eager telegrams—which so often do not reach their destination, however, and to which, even when they do, there is frequently no reply. On this occasion I saw messengers continually hurrying out with half-concealed despatches in their hands, to be sent by telegraph, but during all the time that I waited I did not see a single telegraphic message entering the Embassy.

When finally I was conducted to the Ambassador, in spite of the irony with which he treated the telegram in the papers, I had almost made up my mind as to its truth. He told me that it was merely an abortive revolution; that a few soldiers, speedily silenced, had cried out "*Viva el Rey*," but that at that moment—it was then half-past six—the excitement had been suppressed, order had been reëstablished in Madrid, the Government having taken energetic measures, and he authorised me to telegraph to my paper that the attempt to restore the monarchy had been easily suppressed by the Government.

In such a case, as in many others, when it is a question of serving his Government or serving himself, an Ambassador will never hesitate to throw a journalist quite overboard and to sacrifice him body and soul, and, if he can, his reputation and his honour, to further his own designs. I left the Ambassador convinced that the *pronunciamento* of Martinez Campos had succeeded, and I resolved not to repeat the story he had told me, or at least to send it with pointed comments. I did not dare to give a

positive form to my conviction by sending an absolutely contrary telegram, for I had no positive proof of the truth of that of which I was persuaded, and I could not discover any justifying facts. I returned discouraged enough, for the time at my disposal was short and the fever had not yet left me. But I ordered a carriage to be in readiness, and with weariness and disappointment betook myself to my chamber in a state almost of madness, because I could see no means of gaining better information.

Queen Isabella, to be sure, with the Prince of Asturias, occupied the Hotel Basilewski, only a few doors from my house, but I neither knew her nor her son, nor any member of their *entourage*, and it was not probable—indeed, it was scarcely possible—that in the circumstances and at such a moment I should be received. Moreover, in returning I had instinctively passed by the Avenue Kléber in front of the Hotel Basilewski (the Palais de Castille), as if to see whether the walls of this house could not tell me something. I saw an enormous crowd in front of the gates, which were all closed, and some policemen who had been sent in haste were with the greatest difficulty holding the throng in check. I imagined that all the reporters of the Paris papers and all the correspondents of foreign papers were mingled in this crowd, trampling down the snow. I considered it useless to increase the number, yet I was more and more in despair at my helplessness.

On the evening of the 31st of December it was useless to try to find any members of the Government in Paris, and as the official seat was at Versailles there seemed no issue out of my difficulties.

Suddenly an idea flashed across my brain.

Some time previously I had met at the Spanish Embassy, then at Versailles, Count de Banuelos, a Senator of Spain, who had spoken in warm terms of the Queen and her son, who was well acquainted with England, and who was a careful reader of the *Times*. He had been quite charming to me. I had called upon him and had been introduced to the most delightful of families, consisting of a very gracious and affable mother and two charming girls. His private residence, 27 Rue de Lisbonne, was near at hand.

It was nine o'clock.

I rushed down to my carriage and gave the address to the coachman. Two minutes after I arrived at the Banuelos mansion. As I entered the hall, the Count, one of the finest-looking men of his time, in full dress, followed by his two daughters, also in evening dress, was descending the stairs to enter the *salon* on the ground floor.

I was extremely embarrassed. I had come by instinct at a venture, without plan or forethought and without knowing exactly why.

On seeing these preparations, indicating that the Count was about to go to a ball, I understood that I could expect no help from him, for at the moment the idea came to me that the only way of penetrating into the Palace of Castille was to go with him.

I asked him if he had any details. He replied that he had learned the news that very moment, that he had previous reasons for thinking it true, and that as he was going to a ball at the Duchess de Malakoff's, with his two daughters, he intended to congratulate the future

King on the following day. I had not advanced very far; the two daughters, who were ready and impatient to go, came to ask for their father.

During this conversation I had become convinced that Count Banuelos alone could open to me the doors of the Palais de Castille, and that there and there only could I hope to obtain any information. But at my first suggestion in this direction the two charming girls were in consternation. Politics did not much interest them. The young Prince of Asturias, whom they greatly liked, had been proclaimed King, but the rest mattered little, and their dance cards were filled with engagements, and their partners were waiting. They were likely to pain many and disappoint others, and to be unkind to the beautiful and good lady, their hostess, who counted upon them. All this drove me to despair. Without insisting, I kissed the young ladies, but my face betrayed the bitter disappointment I felt as I slowly rose to take leave. My disappointment was so obvious that the two girls were moved, and simultaneously, without understanding why I was so much troubled, they consented to let their father go.

It was then for me to refuse. I reproached myself with great selfishness for having troubled the two girls, without even letting them know why they were called upon to sacrifice themselves so completely for me, and I prepared to take my departure.

At that moment the door of the *salon* opened, and the Countess de Banuelos, her face as sympathetic as ever, especially resplendent, for the idea of pleasing others was to her a very great pleasure, now appeared in full dress. No sooner had she learned the difficulty than

she immediately solved the entire situation; she went up to her room and came down ready to take her daughters to the Duchess de Malakoff's, where she promised to await her husband's arrival to relieve her of her charge. There, as always, the soft hand of a woman removed the obstacles that lay in the pathway of my life. With her intervention all difficulties disappeared. We put the ladies into their carriage, and the Count and I betook ourselves to mine, ordering the coachman to drive to the Palais de Castille.

The crowd there was as great as ever, and the greatest precautions had been taken against intruders. Since nine that night nobody had been allowed to enter. A Commissary of Police, with a sufficiently strong squadron of policemen under his orders, was guarding the great gateways opening on the courtyard. Our carriage was stopped even before we had penetrated the crowd.

Count Banuelos put out his head, summoned a policeman and begged him to send for the Commissary. The Count explained who he was, and informed him that he was going to salute the King. The Commissary excused himself with great politeness, but said that he could not allow us to pass. Count Banuelos then gave him his card and begged him to send it by one of his men to Count Morphy, Governor of the Prince of Asturias, henceforth King of Spain. The Commissary of Police glanced at the card, bowed on reading the name that it bore, and granted the request. Ten minutes later a strong cordon of police made a passage in the crowd for our carriage, men protected us and defended the gate, in order to prevent a sudden rush within the courtyard. I was seated in the dark corner of the carriage, and as we

were driven through the great doorway the gates were closed quickly behind us. A journalist who happened to be there, however, recognised my driver.

I heard him crying, "It is Blowitz's carriage," and I also caught the sound of other cries and shouts of objection as we ascended the stone steps leading to the vestibule of the palace.

There was great commotion everywhere. All the intimate friends of the royal palace had been ordered thither, and they went and came, joyous salutations resounding throughout the house in a fashion that seriously compromised the etiquette of the Spanish Court. Here one felt that beyond all doubt the *pronunciamento* had indeed succeeded, and that Alphonso XII. had certainly been proclaimed and recognised as King of Spain.

Count Morphy came to meet us. After the introductions were over, he said to Count Banuelos: "The King will see you with great pleasure; and as for you, monsieur, come in here, I beg you, into the King's study, where he has been till just now. I will tell the King that you are here. I will explain the object of your visit and will return to tell you what he authorises me to say to you."

All who have had the good fortune to know Count Morphy will understand that I had reason to congratulate myself on my introduction to one of the most amiable, accomplished and refined of gentlemen. Every time my good star has brought me since into his presence—at Madrid during the first marriage of the King, and at Paris during the painful incidents of the return from Germany—I recognised in him the same man, as kind, as sympathetic and amiable to others as he was at our

first meeting and, indeed, at the very first moment of that meeting.

While Count Banuelos, accompanied by Count Morphy, ascended to the next floor, where the King was, I entered the "study" of the Prince of Asturias, a room to the left on the ground floor, in that part of the house devoted to Count Morphy. The walls were covered with geographical maps and photographs of sovereigns and princes and princesses of reigning houses, all bearing gracious dedications. On one table was a chart of both hemispheres, and on another, covered with books and papers, lay a volume of "Tacitus," bearing, in whose handwriting I did not know, annotations in Spanish. While I was excitedly engaged in noting the pages of the book thus lying open under my eyes, eager to know what the Prince of Asturias had last read, the door opened and some one entered. I thought it was Count Morphy.

"You see, Count," I said, "I am trying to find the passage——" I looked up. It was the young King himself, who with a smile on his lips and a beaming eye stretched out a slightly feverish hand.

He was dressed with irreproachable taste and wore his evening dress, with its narrow silk lapel, with youthful and easy grace, while a gardenia adorned his buttonhole.

In spite of his extreme youth, his face was serious, his bearing energetic, and a slight line already seamed a broad and intelligent brow, surmounted by fine dark hair arranged with great care.

"May your Majesty pardon me," I said; "I thought it was Count Morphy."

The King made a slight movement, his cheeks coloured rapidly, and his mouth, a little melancholy even at this moment and shaded by a fine youthful mustache, began to smile frankly.

"Excuse me," he said, "for this little movement of surprise, but, although I believe I may consider myself King of Spain, you are the first stranger who has yet greeted me with this title, and I could not repress the slight movement which I perceive did not escape you."

Then, with his back against the fireplace and with an easy and charming simplicity, he told me himself all the details of the movement which had just taken place. He recalled the proclamation of Martinez Campos, the attitude of the troops, the proclamation of the Governor of Madrid, the feeling of the populace there and in the provinces as indicated to him by telegrams. He then spoke of the proclamation that he would himself address to the Spanish people, and he outlined to me the entire plan of the Constitution which he had conceived and was on the point of elaborating.

"I have been utterly surprised at the event," he said, "although I was expecting it. I was afraid it might be too long delayed, but my friend, Martinez Campos, wished to make me a present on this appropriate day of the year, and," he added, laughing, "he could not have chosen a finer one.

"I went out immediately after breakfast to take advantage of a moment's sunshine, and when I returned I saw people running toward the palace. The great gateway was open, with everybody awaiting me on the steps. The Queen was at the top of the stairs and coming down to throw herself into my arms, while the others

cried: '*Vive le Roi!*' Then I understood, and I had all the difficulty in the world to keep from bursting into tears, for I understand very well that my poor Spain has need of a long rest in order to rise from her ruins, and I do not know whether my strength is sufficient."

After some minutes of silence he took my hand as a sign of farewell, and added gaily, "Between ourselves, my intention is to avoid all future *pronunciamentos*, and for that purpose I shall see the army immediately on my return, and see it often in order to teach it that it has only one head, who commands it and its commanders as well, and that that head is the King."

Count Morphy then came to me, while the young King ascended to his apartments on the first floor. I thanked him from the bottom of my heart for my good fortune, to which he had so powerfully contributed, for the King had said to me in our conversation: "My friends, Count Banuelos and Count Morphy, both begged me to see you myself. They probably thought that you had never seen a King so soon after his accession, and that what I told you myself would have more authenticity than what I might say through them. You see I am not yet at that epoch in my reign at which they no longer dare to counsel me."

And I experience great pleasure now, after many years, in expressing to those whom Alphonso XII. called his two friends the feeling of profound and affectionate gratitude which I have ever since this event entertained for them.

Both, happily, while Alphonso XII. reposes in the royal vault of Spain, still live, and can accept the expression of my enduring gratitude.

Blovský z Lumensteina

50 HELLER 50 HELLER

Stvrzuji, že předstojící znak rodu „Blovský z Lumensteina“, s popisem znaků v Saalbuchu č. 32/2 na listu 699 se nalezajícím který v archivu šlechtickém ve Vídni uschován jest, úplně souhlasí.

1 KRONE

V Královských Vinohradech, dne 11 února 1898

č. j. 35429

Jan Vašák m. p.

Osobně mi známý pan Jan Vašák heraldik v Kr. Vinohradech č. p. 281 podepsal přede mnou vlastnoručně tuto listinu v Praze jedenáctého února osmnáctset devadesátosm.

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Pevzl. 50 K

Dr. Bedřich Adam
c. k. notář
m. p.

THE DE BLOWITZ COAT OF ARMS

But I admit I did not prolong my conversation with Count Morphy, who was himself, in spite of the late hour, wearied by many calls upon him. Messages followed one another without cessation, and during the few moments that I remained with him several packages of telegrams were brought in.

It was half-past eleven. Count Banuelos had gone, I know not how, leaving my carriage at my disposal. I ordered my driver to go at a rapid trot, but the snow and slipperiness made this impossible, and he had to take the greatest precaution in order to avoid an accident. It was almost one o'clock when I reached the office of the *Times*. Every moment was precious. I sent off two columns of matter, giving the principal items and my interview with the King, but it was too late to send the details that I have just given.

The following day I remained in bed in a state of intense fever, quite unable to write, and the day after that it was too late to return to the details of that evening. I could therefore only give them in these pages of my journalistic life, as connected with the political events of the time.

But although I could not publish everything, what appeared in the *Times* on the following morning was absolutely unknown to anybody. The correspondence from Madrid was only a repetition of the telegrams in other papers, and it was my story, given by the *Times*, which the telegraphic agencies sent throughout the world.

On the 3rd of January, for the first time since I had been under his orders, Mr. John Delane wrote to me direct, and congratulated me upon what he called my

real masterly stroke. Mr. Delane usually corresponded only with the chiefs of the service, which is sufficiently explained by the fact of his enormous correspondence as editor-in-chief of the *Times*. On receiving this letter, so replete with enthusiasm on the success obtained on the 31st of the previous month, I understood that this last effort, more than all others put together, had triumphed over all the obstacles in the way of my appointment as the *Times* representative at Paris. I awaited with confidence this appointment, which was officially announced on the 1st of February, 1875.

CHAPTER V

The French Scare of 1875

My desire in this chapter is to narrate in all simplicity the story of a historical episode in which I played a certain part—an episode that has been travestied by almost everybody who has written about it, and that has often been spoken of in ignorance. Yet it is one which deserves to be placed in its true light before posterity.

In 1875 the Duke Decazes was Minister of Foreign Affairs and one of the most conspicuous figures in the French political world. From the early days of his appointment as Minister he had become famous as a clever diplomatist. He had taken possession of the post just after the fall of Thiers, succeeding Count de Rémusat, a man whose diplomatic despatches are still regarded as models of their kind. But it must be admitted that the difficulties that lay in the path of the Duke Decazes were infinitely greater than those against which Count de Rémusat had to contend.

As long as Thiers remained in power, Europe was convinced that France would never dream of abandoning the republican form of government. Europe was aware that the home problem in France, in her struggle in defense of the Republican idea against all the furious hostility of the former parties, was of itself so difficult

as to be an earnest of peace. But the accession of the Conservatives, and in particular of the Orleanist party, aroused abroad a great deal of anxiety. It was feared that this party might try to overturn the Republic and establish the Monarchy, and that the peace of Europe might thereby be troubled. Indeed, the new Government seemed at a very early date to be giving some show of reason for this dread. The French bishops, in the very year of the change, and the Bishop of Nancy in particular, published certain pastoral letters which aroused indignation and the anxiety—perhaps only feigned—of Germany. The two monarchical houses, the Legitimists and the Orleanists, united their forces to a common end; a delicate situation was created with Italy; the policy of England was opposed; Spanish susceptibilities were irritated by foreign suspicion to the effect that the new Government favoured the Carlists; and then, little by little, as if in the natural course of things, France found itself hedged about by a circle of suspicious and distrustful neighbours.

This general feeling among European statesmen was not lessened by the elevation of Marshal MacMahon to the Presidency. It was believed that military reorganisation would henceforth be the chief preoccupation of France; and when the National Assembly patriotically voted the creation of the Fourth Battalion, this vote, which had almost been forced upon Parliament, was the expression of widespread national anxiety, which Germany did not fail to note.

Therein resides the true origin of the diplomatic incident of May, 1875.

As soon as the creation of this Fourth Battalion was

decided on, the military party in Germany betrayed much agitation, of which Count Moltke, the personification, after the Emperor, of German military power, was the first to give the signal. From the very start the Emperor William I. had shown that he was resolved to be the sole master in military matters, but he left Prince Bismarck almost absolute freedom in all questions not pertaining to the army. It was in this way, indeed, that he succeeded in soothing the suspicious and the irascible nature of his Chancellor. Even at the present day it is impossible to say what were the secret aspirations of the Chancellor after the treaty of Frankfort, which had sealed the triumph of Germany over France. He had certainly regarded himself from the outset as the sole founder of the new German Empire. His constant utterances after his fall prove how deep-rooted was this conviction.

From the start he was clearly discontented. For a long time he had nursed the all but impossible dream of expelling Austria from Germany, and of including as parts of a single empire, of which he saw the vision, the southern States, the Kingdom of Saxony, and all the independent States scattered over German territory. This end he had constantly pursued amidst the greatest obstacles, and this ambitious scheme he had succeeded in accomplishing solely by his persevering genius. When at the close of the war, after the treaty was signed, M. Pouyer-Quertier said to him, "There's no reason why you should complain; you have been made a Prince," the Chancellor replied, showing him a parchment roll: "You think, then, I have no reason to complain. Certainly I have become a Prince. As for my principality, here it is."

This secret discontent, this disenchantment of a man who thought himself the founder of the empire, was instinctively understood by the Emperor. And it was as a sop to his overleaping ambition that he made Prince Bismarck the real sovereign of Germany, reserving for himself only the absolute control of the army.

Prince Bismarck and Count Moltke were never rivals, for each kept to his respective field, although the former, by his sovereign's pleasure, always wore the uniform with characteristic regularity.

When, therefore, the creation of the Fourth Battalion was decided on, and when Count Moltke, who was ever most vigilant, saw how the active army of France was being strengthened, he communicated his fears not to Prince Bismarck, but to the Emperor William himself. And Prince Bismarck was well aware that it was of no use for him to intervene in any way, either to hasten or retard or even to stop the scheme conceived by Count Moltke, knowing full well beforehand that all intervention in this question would be trespassing on forbidden ground.

Prince Bismarck always energetically protested not only against his being considered the author of an aggressive scheme formulated in 1875 against France, but he has constantly maintained that no such idea had occurred to any one in Germany, and that it existed only in the malevolent minds of the French. The latter, however, claimed that these plans had nearly been successful, and were thwarted only by Russian intervention.

The result of this accusation was calculated to preju-

dice the German nation in the eyes of posterity. It threw upon Russia the entire honourable responsibility of checkmating this design; and on the other hand, Prince Bismarck's attitude toward the French, whom he treated as calumniators, had the result of detracting from the renown of France while it placed Russia in the light of a pretentious Don Quixote.

It is to rectify so many erroneous statements, to apportion to each, in all fairness, his responsibilities and his successes—it is, in a word, to throw light upon a historical event until now left in vague obscurity, that I now write these pages.

All the European foreign offices were secretly informed at the beginning of 1875 of the excited state of feeling in Germany, caused by the creation, by the French chamber, of the Fourth Battalion.

Prince Bismarck's intentions remained, however, a mystery.

It was well known that the Emperor would brook from him no intervention so far as military affairs were concerned; and the German army corps and the German military party looked at matters only from the military point of view. Prince Bismarck, who at the time, evidently, was of opinion that discretion was the better part of valour, assumed an attitude of alert observation, gathered from every quarter of Europe all possible impressions, and bided his time.

Thus the various European foreign offices became aware of the state of mind of the German military party, while they were entirely ignorant of the Chancellor's intentions. On the whole, the general impression was that Prince Bismarck's decisions would in one way or

another triumph, and that, notwithstanding the precision of the resolutions formed by the military party, the matter would still be left vague and uncertain and never develop into anything. This very vagueness was ominous, though, and the air of mystery which in European diplomatic circles surrounded the crisis that had been secretly concocted in the German capital was a quite natural result.

I myself was indirectly informed by various people of the actual state of affairs. I was asked to watch what was going on between Germany and France. I was the constant recipient of letters from all over Europe, asking if it was true that France was becoming so strong as to be a legitimate menace at Berlin and if the Fourth Battalion was a dangerous addition to the French Army. And I saw that these inquiries usually emanated from persons who were the mouthpieces of others. All this was further evidence of the general preoccupation that existed in all European countries.

About this epoch I met M. Clasczko, the keen-sighted author of "Les Deux Chanceliers." He had just returned from a trip through Europe. He had been received everywhere as he deserved to be, for he was a man to be trusted, and he had been struck by the widespread anxiety that was noticeable among European statesmen. He came to see me and we had a long and absolutely frank conversation. Our conclusion was that the situation demanded my keenest attention, and we parted with the agreement to keep each other mutually informed of all that came to our notice.

On the 14th of April, 1875, I met the Duke Decazes at a *soirée* at the house of the Prefect of Police, M. Léon

Renault. The Duke was standing near the door a little apart from the company, as if preferring to be alone. As I went by him I bowed. He stopped me and said:

"You seem in a great hurry."

"No," I replied; "but you appear to have something on your mind, and I did not wish to be indiscreet."

"You are paying me a very poor compliment," he retorted, "for, if I really have something on my mind, I ought not to show it; and if I have not, it is a great mistake to appear to have. But confess that you said this for a purpose: you wanted to let me know that you think I really ought to be anxious."

"No, Monsieur le Duc," I said, "I was not as subtle as that. The truth is, that, thinking you were worried, I discovered that your face betrayed it."

"We cannot talk here," said the Duke. "Come to see me to-morrow evening and we will have a long talk. In my rooms no one will interrupt us."

On the following evening at nine I was at the house of the Duke Decazes. I knew how much he hated being forced to talk or to have information wrung from him. As this process had always seemed to me childish and commonplace, I was tempted less than ever to apply it in his case. I therefore produced and read aloud in a clear voice the letters that I had received about the German military party, the notes I had taken on the subject from conversations with foreign diplomatists and even with members of the Paris diplomatic corps, and in particular the very characteristic words of M. Clasczko.

After listening for some time, the Duke said:

"I really have not anything to tell you. You know

all that has come to my knowledge, and my information so strongly corroborates yours that there is only one conclusion to be drawn, namely, that every foreign office in Europe is preoccupied with our relations with Germany. I must add, however, to what you have said merely this: Hohenlohe came here and tried to turn the conversation upon our armaments and the anxiety which they are causing in Germany. I tried to turn the subject, as it is too risky to discuss. But I know Hohenlohe well, and I know his orders. He will come back, and if I continue to avoid the topic, and refuse all explanations, he will arrange to bring about a *coup d'état* of some kind or other. He will succeed in obtaining leave of absence, and will manage to leave Paris in such a way as to compromise the situation, for his presence here is a gage of peace. What troubles me is that the Germans still surround their plans with so much mystery that the world continues to be ignorant of them, and that these plans may come to maturity at any moment, when it will be too late to do anything.

"The Russian Emperor thinks of going to Berlin at the beginning of May, and everything that is possible will be done to keep the matter dark. The Emperor will, of course, be told about these plans, but he will pretend that he does not know about them and refuse to believe them; and he will not venture to allude to them so long as they are not mentioned to him. How, indeed, can a sovereign allow another sovereign, a friendly one, to suppose that he regards the latter capable of such an act of aggression against a vanquished and disarmed people—an aggression which, in the present circumstances, would be little short of barbarous? So that all possible secrecy

will be kept at Berlin during the Emperor's stay, and if the matter should come to the surface at all it will be after he has gone.

"For this reason I think that there is only one way to prevent the Russian Emperor from being compelled, while at Berlin, to hold his peace. I will tell you how. Some authoritative journal, known throughout the world, should expose the entire situation, and this journal, I need hardly tell you, should be the *Times*.

"No French journal could possibly do it, for the Germans would have the right to regard it as a provocation, and no one would believe the statement abroad. To adopt such a course would therefore be a very great mistake. Nor could such an exposure be made in an Italian journal; those friendly to us have no authority. In Austria no important paper would care or dare to do it; and the Russian press is obviously out of the question, as its intervention, even were the censors to allow it, would put the Russian Emperor in a false position at Berlin. The *Times* is the only paper in the world which can possibly publish such information with any telling and authoritative effect. And that is what I ask you to do."

"I am perfectly ready, as far as I am concerned," I said, "to undertake this work, but you will understand that the subject is too important for me to be able to guarantee publication without previously informing the *Times* and obtaining its assent. I shall write to-morrow to Mr. John Delane, and act according to his orders."

I did so. I placed the exact situation before Mr. Delane and asked explicitly for permission to write a

letter publicly denouncing the plan of aggression against France conceived by the German military party.

Mr. John Delane replied that my communication had greatly interested, even moved him, but he said that such an insinuation against a civilised nation could not be risked by a paper like the *Times* unless it were backed up in the most positive and official manner, so that, if called to account, absolute and crushing proof could be adduced in reply. I showed his letter to the Duke Decazes, and it caused him much disappointment, although he agreed with me that Mr. John Delane could scarcely act differently. He began to walk up and down the room in great agitation, constantly repeating:

"Time presses. We must act, or it will be too late. I persist in my idea: the *Times* is the only paper which can do what I ask; and if it does not do it, all may be lost." Then turning to me suddenly, he said, "What Mr. Delane wants, then, is information so authoritative that he may be sure he is acting on the best faith in the world?"

"Certainly," I replied; "that is Mr. Delane's idea."

"Very well," he said; "come back and see me this evening."

On returning in the evening I found him in one of the small first-floor rooms, where he was always to be seen when alone.

"Do you think," he asked, "that Mr. Delane would publish your letter if you assured him on your word of honour that you referred to an absolutely authentic document?"

"I am sure of it," I replied. "The day when my word

of honour is not enough for Mr. Delane he will no longer find me under his orders."

"Then," said the Duke Decazes, "I am going to do something that is absolutely unusual. I am going to communicate to you an official and confidential document; but in so acting I am convinced that I am acting in my country's interest and in that of Europe. I must ask you, though, to swear to me that, in my lifetime, you will not say that I have shown you this document unless you are compelled for the honour of your paper to do so. Not that I fear to confess to all the world what I am going to do, but because I know the passions that exist all about us. If the misfortune that I fear should occur, I should be blamed for not having warded it off; and if I succeed in preventing it, it will be said to have existed only in my imagination. For this reason I ask you to keep your own counsel as to our interview—at least as long as I am in this world. If you survive me, I authorise you to speak; for by that time I hope the hour of justice will have arrived for me, and my act will be seen to be that of an ardent patriot, anxious only to defend his country against a fresh calamity."

With these words the Duke took out of a drawer in a small desk that stood at the right of the chimney-piece a rather large paper note-book and handed it to me.

The book contained a despatch from the Count de Gontaut-Biron, French Ambassador at Berlin. In this despatch the Count de Gontaut-Biron, who was always most highly respected by all those who knew him, had given the Duke Decazes a detailed account of his interview with M. de Radowitz, whom he had met at a ball.

M. de Radowitz, having turned the theme of conversa-

tion to the famous Fourth Battalion and the French armaments, which were arousing the anxiety of the German Government, revealed to him the plans conceived against France by the German military party. M. de Radowitz stated that Count Moltke had great influence over the Emperor and had proved to him the necessity of an immediate war with France. The German armies were to invade France, crush instantly all opposition, press on to Paris, invest the capital, and take up a position on the plateau of Avron, whence they could overlook Paris and, if need be, destroy it. This done, Germany would dictate a treaty reducing France to absolute subjection for many years. It would insist on a permanently reduced army, impose a war indemnity of 10,000,000,000 (ten milliards) of francs, payable in twenty annuities, without any clause allowing payment to be made in advance, with annual interest at five per cent., and keep garrisons in the principal towns of France until the whole sum should be paid. Count de Gontaut-Biron had scarcely been able to maintain his *sang-froid* during this revelation. He pretended to M. de Radowitz that he did not believe it, and he had thus forced him to confirm his words in the most absolute fashion. He left M. de Radowitz in the greatest excitement, for he felt sure that the latter had spoken by order, although he could not conceive who had commanded it, or why. He believed that the idea was to frighten France, and to force that country into some overtures of explanation which would reassure Germany. But he left no stone unturned to investigate the matter and corroborate this information. The result of his inquiries was that he had become certain that the scheme had been

concocted only by the military party, and that Prince Bismarck, as far as his responsibility went, was an absolute stranger to the plan.

As may be easily imagined, I was profoundly impressed by the reading of this document. In tones betraying my emotion I returned the note-book, and, thanking the Duke, said:

"I will write the letter, and I swear to you to do all that is in my power to obtain its publication."

On going home, without a moment's delay I wrote a letter revealing the entire plan of the German military party as told by M. de Gontaut-Biron from the information given by M. de Radowitz. And on receiving this letter, Mr. John Delane, frightened at its contents, took measures himself to discover what was true and what was false in the terrible scheme thus circumstantially revealed.

Some days went by without the letter's appearing. I began to be apprehensive, when suddenly, on May 4, 1875, it was published under the title, "The French Scare."

The effect was instantaneous and universal. The Emperor Alexander II. no longer had any excuse, during his approaching visit to Berlin, not to know all about the matter; and indeed, in the midst of the excitement aroused by my letter, the German Chancellor himself had nothing left to do but to bring before the Russian Emperor the question of this bellicose scheme imputed to Germany, and to wash his hands of it.

The German Emperor, too, on meeting M. de Gontaut-Biron, said to him, "They are trying to embroil matters between us, but fortunately they have not succeeded."

Prince Gortchakoff lost no time in addressing to the

Russian representatives a circular beginning "Peace is henceforth assured." Lord Derby, on his part, assured Englishmen of the same fact.

But the French press, mistaking altogether the motives which had dictated the *Times* letter, and quite without reflection, heaped upon its author the most incredible insults. The German press, seeing what had been the effects of it, echoed the attacks of the French newspapers, until the latter, finally detecting the real motive that had inspired the letter, ceased their diatribes. Six weeks later, as I was entering the Countess de Valon's *salon* with a friend, a Frenchman who was there asked my friend how much Prince Bismarck had paid me for "publishing the scare letter."

This is sufficient to show to what degree of blindness my act of loyalty had driven the French press, an act made possible by the courageous and enlightened support of my chief.

I confess that the following letter from Mr. John Delane made up for all these attacks and insults:

"MAY 18.

"*My Dear Mr. de Blowitz:* I did not need your very interesting letter of the 14th inst. to appreciate the entire success of that startling public letter by which you alarmed Europe to a sense of its imminent danger. It has been of the greatest public service, and, as I sincerely believe, has done even much to spare the world the horrors of another war. No greater honour than to have aided in averting war is within the reach of the journalist.

"As to the French and German press, I hope you have philosophy enough to bear their attacks with contemptuous equanimity."

On December 17, 1878, I was dining at the Café Voisin. General Leflô entered and sat down at a table in a corner close by. As I had finished my dinner, I joined him. General Leflô had been French Ambassador at St. Petersburg during the period of the incidents called by the *Times* "The French Scare." He, better than any one, was able to give me details of the incident in which I had been myself so closely associated. The following is a faithful account of what he said to me:

"I was in Paris when the incident of 1875 first began to arouse the attention of European statesmen. I called on the Duke Decazes and took the liberty of telling him that, to my mind, his fears in reference to an attack by Germany upon France were greatly exaggerated. The Duke replied that he had in his possession certain trustworthy documents which appeared to him to justify all his fears. As a result of this conversation I was to return as soon as possible to St. Petersburg. But before my departure I wished to call on Prince Orloff, then Russian Ambassador in Paris, to let him know that I was going back to Russia.

"'I have just mentioned your name in a telegram to Prince Gortchakoff,' said Prince Orloff to me. 'I am quite of your opinion that the fears of the Duke Decazes are chimerical, and I do not believe that any one now thinks of attacking France.'

"From Prince Orloff I went to the Elysée to see the Marshal, for I wished to tell him, as well as the Duke Decazes, of the encouraging impression left upon me by Prince Orloff's words. The Marshal was out, so I proceeded to the house of the Duke Decazes. He, too, was away from home. Returning to the Elysée, I found an

aide-de-camp of the President, whom I entrusted with a message for the latter to the effect that, as I did not wish to leave Paris for my post without seeing him, I would call again on the morrow, postponing my journey for a day. The same evening I received from the Marshal a note fixing an appointment for nine o'clock on the following morning. I went there at the hour named. In all frankness I told him what I myself thought, adding that my opinion had been corroborated by other men of standing; and I protested against the views held not only by him but by his Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Duke Decazes, as well as by some other French statesmen.

"'You seem to take the whole matter very easily,' said the Marshal, and with a key attached to his watch-chain he opened a drawer and took out a packet of papers.

"These papers were official documents of all kinds, including some military reports to the Government and to the President. They came from all the French military *attachés* in Europe, and testified to the recent activity of Germany in provisioning its troops, in purchasing horses, and in storing up fresh ammunition. It was stated that all these horses and this ammunition had been transferred to the neighbourhood of the French frontier. They contained the fullest and most astounding details as to the process of mobilisation which had been secretly going on in Germany for some time.

"It took me more than an hour to look through these documents with care, and I made a brief summary of them, which I submitted to the Marshal, and which I wished to take with me to St. Petersburg.

"The following morning I set out. It was a tiresome

journey, especially for a man of my age. I had seen Prince Orloff before leaving, and, with the consent of the Marshal and the Duke Decazes, had told him what I had just learned and how I had begun to share their fears. He entrusted me with a long despatch for Prince Gortchakoff, the exact contents of which were not known to me. On arriving at St. Petersburg I was so exhausted by my journey that, in sending to Prince Gortchakoff the despatch, I excused myself for not calling upon him immediately, and said that I should go to see him within forty-eight hours.

"But on the morrow, before I was up—on account of my fatigue I had remained in bed longer than usual—my man-servant came to tell me that Prince Gortchakoff was in the *salon*. I dressed in haste and went down to see him.

"'I came to inquire about your health,' he said, 'and to talk over Prince Orloff's despatch. I am rather of his opinion that your fears are a little exaggerated. It is true enough that they are angry in Berlin at the energy you are displaying in repairing your disasters, and at the remarkable result you have already obtained in the short space of four years, while other nations would have spent the time in thinking matters over. But anger such as this does not mean that they think of attacking you, and I really believe that you insult the national honour of our time by imagining that they entertain in Germany any such intention.'

"I made no reply. This was clearly the part that Prince Gortchakoff might be expected to play. He knew that it was not by adding fuel to the fire of our anxiety that the situation could be made less serious, or

that minds could be calmed. Instead of discussing the matter with him, I asked to be immediately presented to the Emperor. The Prince promised to arrange the matter that very day.

"The Emperor had the very correct rule, I well knew, of always replying on the following day to any request for an audience made by a member of the diplomatic corps. When three days went by without an answer, I began to be greatly troubled. I took his silence as evidence of his slight regard for French anxiety at the moment, and my distress increased with my irritation.

"It was in this state of mind that I met Prince Gortchakoff again. I confessed to him how anxious I felt, and I told him how much I feared a failure in my mission of interesting the Czar in my country.

"My words evidently had their effect, for on that very evening I was told that the Emperor would receive me on the following day. I was there at the appointed hour. The Emperor, although amiable, was a little cool in his manner. Even before I had begun to speak of my mission, he said to me, as if echoing Prince Gortchakoff's words: 'I know what brings you here, but I hope that your fears are exaggerated. People at Berlin are certainly startled at your extraordinary activity, but that doesn't mean that they are thinking of attacking you.'

"This language frightened me. The Czar had spoken in a tone of such evident firmness that it seemed as though nothing could change his opinion. I felt that it was the expression of an irrevocable foregone conclusion in favour of Germany, and that any words of mine would be taken only as a calumny against that country's honour. But I could not hesitate. I placed before him all the com-

munications shown to me by Marshal MacMahon, the reports of the military *attachés* and Foreign Ministers, and without comment I merely begged him to look them through. He did so with some attention and his face betrayed his emotion.

"I then began to speak. I admitted to him that France was weak, it was true, but just then in such a state of mind that so perfidious, so barbarous an attack by Germany would drive it to exasperation; that if the worst should really happen it would be a war to the death without quarter, and that all Europe would be dragged into this struggle of extermination. I was so deeply affected by the sense of the enormous responsibility that weighed upon me that I burst into tears.

"The Emperor rose quickly. He came up to me, and, drawing himself up to his full height, with one hand he took mine, and placing the other, with a dignified and friendly gesture, upon my shoulder, said, in a voice of restrained emotion:

"'Be calm. You shall not be attacked. I promise you to prevent any such scheme. Europe will never see such a spectacle!'

"My joy at these words was profound. A man so omnipotent as Alexander II., a man so alive to the sense of sovereign responsibility, could not possibly have used this language without being sincere. In circumstances like these the word of a sovereign was more sacred, more inviolable, than any treaty. His promise, 'Europe will never see such a spectacle,' was an encouragement in which I could have absolute confidence. I left the royal presence relieved of an enormous weight. Hurrying home, I sent to the Duke Decazes a despatch in cipher,

warning him to have it read in his presence by his most confidential clerks; and I so wrote it that if deciphered in portions by several persons there could be no possible danger of its sense being indiscreetly detected.

"The reply of the Duke Decazes came very speedily. It was full of the greatest admiration for and gratitude toward Alexander II. It said that France, under the shelter, as it were, of this imperial utterance, might await the future in all confidence, and bare its face to the storm without fear. But in a private portion the Duke added: 'It must not be forgotten that the war, now being secretly planned in Berlin in so much mystery and silence, might at any time burst forth suddenly, and as the Czar has solemnly affirmed that this shall not happen, His Majesty may feel called upon to draw his own sword to keep the promise of his inviolable word. His Majesty, in the enthusiastic expression of his generous soul, has perhaps not thought of such a contingency; but we should be disloyal and ungrateful to His Majesty if, while using the greatest prudence, we did not make this possibility quite clear.'

"This telegram worried me considerably. I wondered if the Duke Decazes was not carrying a little too far his feelings of loyalty and gratitude to the Czar, and I also wondered if, in communicating this excessive scruple, I might not upset all that I had done and expose France again to isolation. Looking through the despatch again, I marked with a red pencil the confidential passages in order to leave them out when I read it to Prince Gortchakoff.

"Simultaneously with this despatch, I received a copy of a conversation between Count de Gontaut-Biron and

M. de Radowitz, and a circumstantial account of a ministerial council held in Berlin, in the Emperor William's presence when Count Moltke had spoken as follows: 'It is not peace that we have made, but only a truce. To-day France is without an army and without money. In spite of its all but inexhaustible prosperity, it could not possibly raise the sums necessary to organise a resistance worthy of the name. It would certainly try to fight—and fortunately, too, for us, for we would not think of attacking a nation unable to do its best to resist us. But now, whatever the resistance, our success is certain. A new war is only a question of time, and if we postpone it for eighteen months, France, with the marvellous resources which it has at its disposal, will have so far recovered from its disasters as to be able to set against us an army equal to our own. Its frontiers will have been reëstablished, and in eighteen months it will have as strong an artillery as we have to-day. It is a matter of whether we wish to sacrifice or not 100,000 men, for that is what will be inevitable if we put matters off. From every point of view, military, political, philosophic, and even Christian, an immediate war is a necessity.'

"Taking the diplomatic paper which contained these words, the military reports and the despatch of the Duke Decazes, I called unexpectedly upon Prince Gortchakoff. I found him lying on a sofa, laid up with an injured foot. Seeing him in this state, I was about to withdraw, but the Prince insisted that I should stay. I began to read to him the despatch from the Duke Decazes, of course leaving out the marked passages. But the room was not well lighted, and I stumbled at a

certain place. The Prince noticed that I was not reading it all, and interrupting me, said:

" 'My dear General, you really believe that Germany is planning to attack your country because you are now unable to defend yourself successfully; and you think, therefore, that this must at any cost be prevented, lest a great blot should stain the history of this country. So be it, but in these circumstances all hesitation is a crime, and reticence would be bad policy. I know my master. I know how he is touched by confidence placed in him, if only it be absolute and without reserve. He did not speak as he did lightly, for he has since repeated his words to me. Give me, then, the whole of your document, and I will send it to him this very moment, without even looking at it myself.'

"I hesitated no longer, but handed the paper to him just as it was. The Prince wrote a note there in my presence. He put the manuscript with the note into an envelope, and calling an aide-de-camp, sent the package to the Emperor.

"I confess that on leaving Prince Gortchakoff I was in what may be called a 'state of mind.' The Emperor was to leave for Berlin within four days. I could not ask for another audience. Prince Gortchakoff was laid up at home, and it was not even certain that he would be able to accompany the Czar. How, then, could I learn the effect produced upon him by the despatch from the Duke Decazes with its dangerous passages? I was myself ill on the following day, having been overexcited by the events which had taken place, and I was obliged to remain in bed. My secretary brought me the news that the Emperor was to go that very evening to a *soirée* at the

Princess Yousoupoff's. I sent for my doctor, and after much persuasion induced him to let me get up and go to this party. I arrived after the entertainment had begun, but I was scarcely inside the great gallery when I saw the Emperor entering it at the opposite end. I noticed that he was looking at me. Then he made a slight sign of recognition and came slowly toward me between the hedge, so to speak, of guests that was formed on either side. As he advanced, I felt myself turning pale. But when he had come up he stretched out both hands, and as everybody had discreetly gone a short distance away, said:

"'I have been greatly touched by your confidence. Do not regret it. You may be sure that all that is humanly possible I shall do. You will not be attacked unawares. I swear it.'

"Two days afterward I was present among the staff officers near the Emperor during a review. At its close, and as I passed before the Emperor to take leave of him, he stopped me with a sign, and said: '*Adieu, Général; ou, mieux, au revoir. Rassurez votre gouvernement.*' Then, with a kindly smile, he recalled the confidential passages in the despatch from the Duke Decazes, saying: 'Tell the Duke Decazes he may be tranquil. There will be no surprise.'

"There," concluded General Leflô, turning to me; "now you have the complete and detailed account of my personal action in the affair of 1875. The rest took place in Berlin, for on the morrow the Emperor left St. Petersburg, and I did not see him again."

If the preceding narrative has been read with attention, the conclusion will appear obvious. As has been seen,

it was M. de Radowitz who revealed to M. Gontaut-Biron the plan of the military party in all its details. Such an indiscretion as this on the part of a German diplomatist, unless it was committed by order, would have drawn down upon him the severest punishment. But who could possibly have ordered this indiscretion? Certainly not Count Moltke, who was pursuing his plan of attack with his characteristic tenacity. It was Prince Bismarck—and the fact does him the greatest honour—who ordered M. de Radowitz to let M. de Gontaut-Biron know what was going on in Germany. Prince Bismarck knew that the Emperor William I. had been much influenced by Count Moltke's pertinacity. He knew that on the military ground there was no chance of his intervention. But he saw, not only that the rights of nations and national honour forbade the execution of this scheme as an ineradicable blot on the pages of history, but also that politically—from the point of view, that is, of the attitude of England and Russia—such an enterprise might turn out to be most disastrous for Germany. Austria, moreover, had not forgotten the defeat of 1866, and there was the danger that it might join Russia and England to prevent such an attack on France. Prince Bismarck, therefore, thought that the best way to cut short a project of which he was himself no longer the master was to reveal it to official Europe and let the force of public opinion take its dissuasive course.

It has been said that this action on his part was traiterous toward the German military party. But that is absurd. There was a consideration in Prince Bismarck's mind above and beyond this. It was the historic honour

of the German nation and the danger to which, in spite of French weakness, his country might be exposed. Moreover, all who remarked that during the Berlin Congress M. de Radowitz, as secretary, was seated for an entire month directly in front of Prince Bismarck, that the Prince treated him always with the utmost kindness, and that until Prince Bismarck's fall he was the recipient of constant favours from the Chancellor, perceived clearly enough in these marks of special honour the evidence of M. de Radowitz's great rôle during the crisis of 1875. There can be no doubt that the latter acted by special order, and that this historic episode occurred as I have related it. The hostile projects of Count Moltke remained unfulfilled only because of Prince Bismarck's failure to coöperate. He undermined them by bold but direct tactics, which were quite in keeping with his well-known audacity.

CHAPTER VI

The Berlin Congress

The publication, in the *Times*, of the Treaty of Berlin at the very hour it was being signed in Berlin, was, according to universal opinion, the greatest journalistic feat on record, and that publication, due to me, is the subject of the chapter I am writing. I say this plainly because I feel no pride about it. To have published an important document before anybody else does not make you a great writer or even a great journalist, and I would rather have written "The Battle of Dorking" than have published all the secret documents in the world. Any journalist by profession might have done what I did if he had said "I *will* do it," and had thought over the ways of accomplishing his scheme. It was a feat in which neither talent nor science stood for anything.

The story I am about to tell must not therefore be ascribed to vanity, but should merely be considered as the fulfilment of a duty to my journalistic profession, to which I am devoted. People ought to know by what efforts of imagination and perseverance one sometimes succeeds in keeping them posted, especially as the reader who runs his eye over a document paraded in the columns of a newspaper is apt to fancy that it had simply to be asked for or bought. Now, if documents had merely to be bought, nothing would be easier than to procure them. Rich papers would purchase them,

M. DE BLOWITZ IN 1878 AT THE BERLIN CONGRESS

while the others, as is customary, would reprint them gratis without informing their readers from what source they were derived. But this is not enough. To be able to pay for a document is not sufficient, for in the majority of cases bought documents are spurious; men who possess genuine ones refuse to sell them. I will, therefore, relate the history of the acquisition of a document which necessitated not only the spending of money, but long preliminary labour, the warding-off of failure, and the throwing off the scent of those who sought to discover the origin of the communication. I give the story because it ought not to die with me, and because it belongs to the history of modern journalism.

In October, 1877, on calling one morning on the Duke Decazes, Minister of Foreign Affairs, in the large office he occupied on the first floor at the Quai d'Orsay, he said to me:

"There will soon be a Congress for the settlement of the Eastern question. I shall be the representative of France. I shall then have been Member of Parliament, Ambassador, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Plenipotentiary representing France at an International Diplomatic Congress. People will no longer be able to twit me with not having worthily upheld the name I bear, and with not having at least endeavoured to give fresh lustre to it."

Then, after a few minutes' silence, he added:

"You ought to go to the Congress; it will be very interesting; and I will do all I can, consistently with my duty, to facilitate your task."

"You forget, Monsieur le Duc," I said, "that rather more than two years ago there appeared in the *Times* a

letter entitled 'A French Scare,' denouncing the warlike projects of the German military party, and stating that the author of that letter could not go to Berlin, where the Congress will be held, without incurring the risk of much that is disagreeable."

"I am sure that nothing will be done to remind you of that, and I still think that, if you are told to go, you should willingly do so."

By a rather curious coincidence I had received a call that very afternoon from a young foreigner, whom a friend warmly recommended to me. This young man had a pleasing, intelligent countenance, and impressed me very favourably. He told me he had left the country because his brother had been induced to gamble, had lost all that both of them possessed, had victimised people, and had gone away leaving his debts; that he himself, though clear of it all, had been forced to emigrate to escape the shame of constantly hearing abused the name of his brother, whom he nevertheless dearly loved. What he now wanted was to earn a small sum which would enable him to go to the colonies, to try and make a fortune and to retrieve his name by paying his brother's debts.

The story was quite true. This honest young man interested me very much. I felt that he was ready to make the greatest efforts to attain his object, and I promised to see what I could do for him.

I made several applications in his favour, but without success. This was all the more strange, as the young man had an excellent bearing, was very intelligent, spoke several languages, wrote them fairly well, and would have made the most valuable secretary imaginable.

He called on me several times and I became more and more interested in him. One morning when he arrived I had just had a letter informing me that there was an idea of sending me to the Berlin Congress, the meeting of which had been delayed for a time, but which was certain to take place in the course of that year. It was then January. Marshal MacMahon had been defeated, and the Duke Decazes had fallen. There was an attempt to put forward the Duke as Plenipotentiary, M. Waddington, Minister of Foreign Affairs, being too much of a novice in diplomacy to assume such a post.

I knew M. Waddington well. M. Dufaure had deputed me two days before the formation of his Cabinet to ask him whether he would consent to take over the portfolio of the Foreign Office, and I am bound to say that, although Madame Waddington had strongly dissuaded him, he had nevertheless accepted. He was very nervous at first, and afraid of opening his mouth lest he should commit a blunder. I knew, therefore, that there was no relying on him at Berlin for helping me in my task, and that for fear of compromising his diplomatic fame he would maintain absolute reticence.

I reflected that in going to Berlin I should encounter the hostility of the Chancellor and most of his supporters, as they resented my letter of 1875. The English diplomatists make it a rule to communicate nothing; the Russians would distrust the correspondent of an English journal; Count Corti, if it were he who represented Italy, would be exposed to a violent opposition, and would not risk receiving blows by making confidences; and the Austrians, hedged in by Germany and Russia, would not venture to open their mouths. As for the Turks, like all

those marked out beforehand for victims, they would be afraid of their own shadow, even if they had a shadow, of which I was not certain.

On reflection I felt that I was going to make a grand fiasco at Berlin and compromise a career which, tolerably brilliant at the outset, had already brought on me much resentment, as well as calumnies and attacks of which I have not ceased to be proud. The idea was unbearable, and I felt that, in the interest of the *Times* as well as in my own interest, it would be better for me not to go to the Congress.

Just then my young friend was announced. I had not seen him for a long time and had positively allowed him to slip my memory. Here I must confess that I have a theory which will perhaps be ridiculed, but which has governed my whole life. I believe in the constant intervention of a Supreme Power, directing not only our destiny in general, but such actions of ours as influence our destiny. When I see that nothing in nature is left to chance, that immutable laws govern every movement, that the faintest spark that glimmers in the firmament disappears and reappears with strict punctuality, I cannot suppose that anything to do with mankind goes by chance, and that every individuality composing it is not governed by a definite and inflexible plan. The great men whose names escape oblivion are like the planets which we know by name, and which stand out from among the multitude of stars without names. We know their motions and destinies. We know at what time the comet moving in infinite space will reappear, and that the smallest stars, whose existence escapes us, obey the fixed law which governs the universe. Under

various names, in changing circumstances, by successive and coördinate evolutions, the great geniuses known to the world, those whose names have escaped oblivion, reappear. Moses is reflected in Confucius, Mohammed in John Huss, Cyrus lives again in Cæsar, and Cæsar in Napoleon, Attila is repeated in Peter the Great, and Frederick II. in Bismarck, Louis le Débonnaire in Philip VII., and Catalina in Boulanger. Charlemagne and Joan of Arc alone have not yet reappeared, the one to revive authority and the other *la pudeur*. . . . Everything moves by a fixed law, and man is master of his own destiny only because he can accept or refuse, by his own intervention and action, the place he should fill and the path traced out for him by the general decree, which regulates the movements of every creature.

By virtue of this theory, it will be easily understood that I have always endeavoured to divine the intentions and designs of the Supreme Will which directs us. I have always sought not to thwart that ubiquitous guidance, but to enter on the path which it seemed to point out to me. As at the very time the idea of going to Berlin plunged me in despair my door opened and I saw my young friend enter, it struck me that he was destined to assist me in the accomplishment of the task devolving on me at Berlin.

"You are still bent on undertaking whatever is honestly possible to effect your purpose?" I asked.

"I am," he replied.

"Then call on me again in a few days."

I went to see Prince Hohenlohe, the German Ambassador to the French Republic.

"Your Highness," I said (this title appertains to him

as a descendant of a mediatised family), "I shall probably be deputed to attend the Berlin Congress as correspondent of my paper. I know there is a lively recollection of a letter published in 1875 against the projects of the German military party, and, as your Highness has been friendly to me, I have come to ask whether or not you would advise me to go to Berlin, or whether I am not liable to meet with a reception that would render my mission very difficult, if not impossible."

The Prince was silent a few seconds.

"I must reflect," he said; "come again in three days."

Three days meant that he would make inquiries at Berlin.

When I returned he said:

"I have reflected. You can go to Berlin. You will be well received."

Two days later my young friend called again. "This," I said, "is what I want you to do. You must leave Paris in a few days. Here is a letter of introduction, from a friend of mine not concerned in politics, to the private secretary of a foreign statesman who will certainly represent his country at the Berlin Congress. You will present yourself with this letter, as a young man seeking a situation that is liable to improve rapidly, but to which at present no salary is attached. You have some weeks, perhaps months, before you. You will employ them in getting an introduction to the chief of the person to whom you are recommended, and you will manage so that, when the Congress convenes, if he goes you go with him. I shall be there. I do not ask you to divulge the smallest secret to me or to commit the slightest indiscretion. You will never speak to me

of things about to be done. You will simply help me in forestalling the information of others, and when the Congress has adopted articles you will communicate them to me; but I shall not publish them till the day the Congress holds its last sitting, in order not to thwart its labours. Here is the address at which you will keep me posted; and when the Congress is over, provided you have faithfully performed your task, I will hand you the sum you deem necessary for making your fortune in the colonies."

Four days afterward he started.

Several weeks elapsed, and the constantly deferred Congress was convened for the 13th of June, 1878. I arrived at Berlin on the 11th. On the way and at Berlin I had a pleasant reception, as I had been assured. Everybody was affable, but, as I had foreseen, nobody gave me the slightest information. Some days before starting I had said to a German diplomatist:

"At Paris, the fish talk; at Berlin, the parrots are dumb."

The remark had been repeated, and people seemed resolved on confirming it.

Lord Odo Russell, though neither a parrot nor a fish, received me with the charming manners which made him so popular, but did not give me the smallest item of information.

M. Waddington was visibly embarrassed at receiving me. It was much the same everywhere—affable greetings, pressing invitations, great courtesy, but nothing, absolutely nothing, for the impatient tooth of the correspondent.

Prince Bismarck, in receiving the Plenipotentiaries, had told them that indiscretions must be avoided at all cost, and that the journalists who had invaded Berlin

must be prevented from sending their papers authentic information. Outside rumours must not hamper the march of the Congress; and it was also, I think, a question of keeping up the reputation for muteness of the German capital.

On the 13th of June the Congress opened. The journalists assembled at Berlin walked like exiled shadows in the Wilhelmstrasse, lying in wait for the echoes which escaped or might escape from the Congress hall. They learned that the Chancellor had made the members pledge themselves to absolute silence on the deliberations of the Congress. Hence, general consternation!

On the night of the 13th I talked with my young friend, the only interview I had with him during my whole stay. He had succeeded splendidly. He was at Berlin as a kind of diplomatic outsider, receiving no salary, no lodging, nothing, indeed, but deputed to coöperate in the labours imposed by the Congress on one of its members. He felt himself, however, closely watched. He brought me some summary information of no great importance, but which served me as a starting-point, and enabled me, indeed, from the very next day, to give my correspondence a more dignified character and to collect some positive facts.

The real labours of the Congress had not begun. We felt that we should not meet again, and, indeed, I never met him afterward. It was settled that we should on no account employ an intermediary, which would have caused us constant uneasiness and would have exposed us to voluntary or unvoluntary imprudence. Finally, at four in the morning, we adopted the following plan—a very poor one, but it seemed preferable to any others:

As I had hired a carriage by the month, I was to let it stand waiting in the evening at some spot. The carriage windows were to be open, and he in passing was to throw in his communications, written on very thin paper and forming a tiny memorandum-book. Though not very well satisfied with this plan, I could hit on no other, nor he either, and we parted with this understanding.

He left the room, but he returned almost immediately, saying:

"Excuse me; I have taken your hat for mine."

An idea struck me.

"Shut the door," I said, "and sit down; your method of communication is found."

That method, which succeeded admirably, was of childish simplicity.

I was staying at the Kaiserhof. Every day he came there for his lunch and dinner. There was a rack where hats were hung. He placed his communications in the lining of his hat, and we exchanged hats on leaving the table. When I was to dine out, I gave him notice overnight, and told him at what hour, before or after dinner, I should take tea. Only twice were we forced to put off the communication till the following day.

Once, however, we had a scare.

One of my English colleagues, on leaving the dining-room, made a mistake and took my friend's hat. Without looking at each other, we felt, as he wrote me next day, that we turned pale. If the colleague in question had kept the hat, he might have discovered the third article of the treaty, which had been adopted at the previous day's sitting, and also a hint of the difficulties that had

arisen between Russia and England on the question of the boundaries of Bulgaria, and very disagreeable consequences for my friend might have been the result. Fortunately, on reaching the door the Englishman put on the hat, which dropped over on his nose. He laughingly took it off and replaced in on its peg. I had risen to take the hat from him, but sat down again. I breathed freely, and my friend must have done the same.

This plan was pursued without a hitch until the 3rd of July. The brief notes which I received in this way enabled me to see several members of the Congress during the evening, beginning with the most communicative one and then going to others, piecing things together, and thus composing a perfect description of the sitting just held.

As an example of how, in such a case, information might be gathered, one evening after dinner I found this in the hat:

"I have not gleaned much. Prince Gortchakoff has made a speech which created a little amusement, ending with the words: 'Russia is more jealous of gathering the laurels of glory than the olive branch of peace!'"

With this phrase, I went to a diplomatist who was an ardent admirer of the old Chancellor. The conversation began with commonplaces, but inevitably turned on the labours of the Congress.

"It seems," I said, "that some members of the Congress ridicule the speech just delivered by Prince Gortchakoff, especially the phrase with which he ended, 'Russia,' etc."

The diplomatist drew himself up.

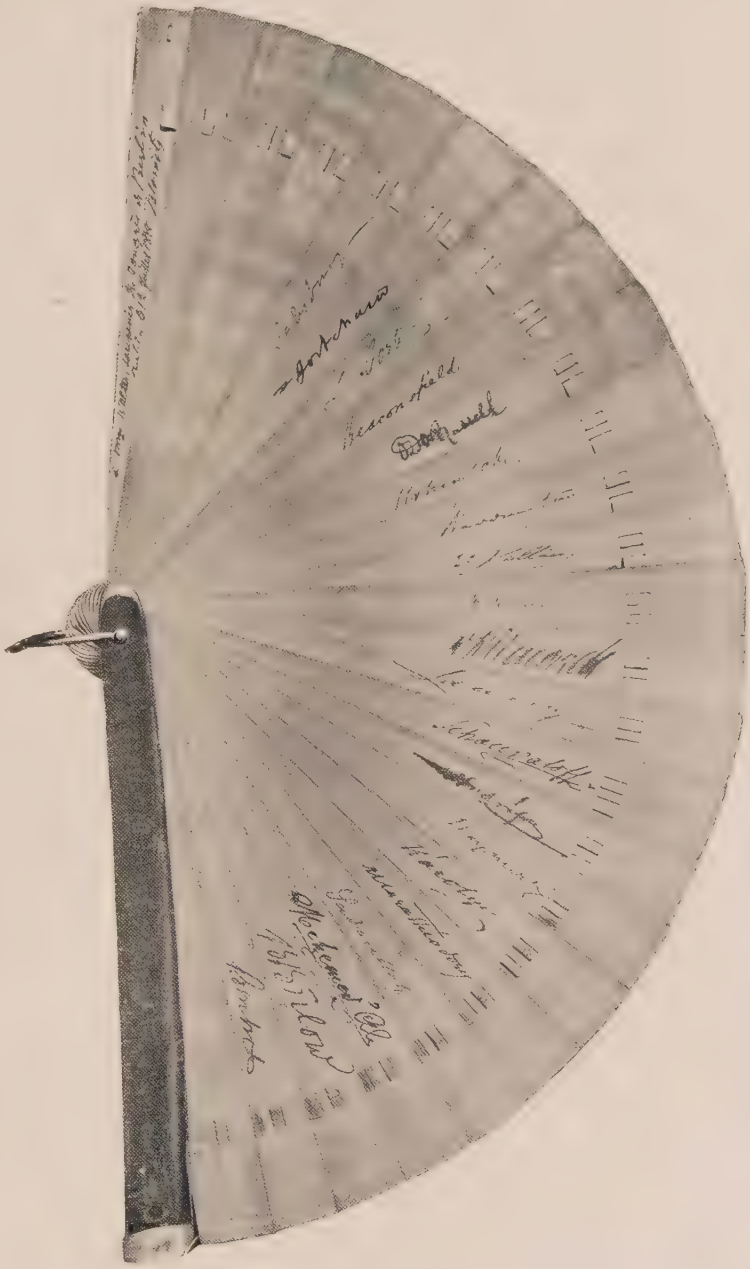
"It is very wrong to ridicule it," he said, "and I hope you are not going to be the echo of these unjust

A SOUVENIR OF THE BERLIN CONGRESS.

Fan signed by the Plenipotentiaries of the Congress and presented by M. de Blowitz to Mrs. Walter, sen.

Marquis of Salisbury	England.
Prince Gortschakoff	Russia
Count Corti	Italy.
Lord Beaconsfield	England.
Lord Odo Russell	England.
Prince Hohenlohe	Germany.
M. Waddington	France.
Comte de St. Vallier	France.
M. Desprez	France.
Prince Bismarck	Germany.
Count Launay	Italy.
Count Schouvaloff	Russia.
Count Andrassy	Austria.
Baron Haymerlé	Austria.
Count Karolyi	Italy.
Karathéodory Pasha	Turkey.
Sadoullah Bey	Turkey.
Mehemet Ali Pasha	Turkey.
Herr von Bülow	Germany.
Baron d'Oubril	Russia.

Presented by Mr. de Bloyette to Mus. N. Hist. Wash.



A SOUVENIR OF THE BERLIN CONGRESS

railleries. The Russian Chancellor's speech was very acute and clever, despite its apparent pretentiousness. He clearly showed that—" and he proceeded to repeat some passages of the speech.

I paid two other visits, and toward midnight could telegraph the speech accurately enough for Lord Salisbury laughingly to say to me next evening at Count St. Vallier's *soirée*:

"You forgot a few commas and semicolons, but with that exception the speech was given quite accurately."

This did not prevent a newspaper from declaring it apocryphal, because I had said "Prince Gortchakoff rose," whereas Plenipotentiaries always speak seated.

I only wish to show how I had to go to work to learn what had taken place at the Congress.

I afterward learned that Prince Bismarck was very much annoyed at the publication of the speech, and that at the next sitting, seated next to a diplomatist from whom he fancied I had obtained it, he lifted up the table-cloth and sarcastically said:

"I am looking to see if Blowitz is not underneath."

The fact is, I had done well to go there. Tongues had been looser at Berlin than at Paris, and I was able on the morning of the 22nd of June to publish the agreement effected the previous night between England and Russia on the Bulgarian question.

That question had raised such difficulties that the sittings of the Congress had been suspended, and Mr. Disraeli, the future Lord Beaconsfield, either from adroitness or in all sincerity, had engaged a special train for Monday, the 24th, to leave Berlin.

It would have been a disastrous rupture.

The whole world was anxiously waiting.

The 22nd was a Saturday.

If I had not been able to publish that morning that an agreement had been effected, Saturday's stock exchange would have had a terrible fall and many people would certainly have been ruined. But the agreement was effected at midnight on Friday, and was known in London at six o'clock in the morning and in the rest of Europe at eight or nine. No stock exchange maneuver was practicable, and by this revelation I made numberless enemies among those who were speculating on a rupture.

When the Wolff Agency at Berlin published a London telegram quoting the information, many even among the members of the Congress—for I knew them—were ignorant of the agreement. It was not to be communicated to them till Saturday's sitting; the only thing they knew was that they were convened for that day.

I had every reason, therefore, to be satisfied, and things went on well till the 4th of July.

On the 3rd my friend had committed an imprudence.

When I started for Berlin—or rather, when Prince Hohenlohe had encouraged me to go—I had said to him:

"Does your Highness think the Chancellor will grant me an audience? In the first place, I am very anxious to know a statesman who is the great historical figure of the second half of the nineteenth century. Moreover, to go to Berlin without seeing Prince Bismarck is like going to Rome without seeing the Pope. It would be a mortification for me."

Prince Hohenlohe, who is the most perfect gentleman I have ever known, and who possesses great diplomatic *finesse* but does not employ it in his private relations,

PRINCE HOHENLOHE

[From an autographed photo presented to M. de Blowitz]

especially when he meets any one who trusts him, replied that he could pledge himself to nothing on that point.

"All I can promise you," he said, "is that I will do my utmost to assist you in obtaining an audience, but I do not answer in any way for the success of a step which I shall take but once. I could not ask for it a second time."

The 1st of July arrived. Prince Bismarck had replied in the negative to the request for an audience, which had been addressed to him in my name by Prince Hohenlohe.

"He had received," he said, "hundreds of applications for an audience. Everybody was at Berlin, and all the leading personages had asked to see him. He could not receive me without receiving the others, especially the journalists. The German journalists, whom he had always refused to receive, would never forgive him if he granted me an interview."

I abandoned the hope of seeing him and felt very much vexed, for by strange ill-luck I had not even caught sight of him.

But on the afternoon of the 1st of July, on entering the hotel, Prince Hohenlohe's card was handed to me. He had called at the hotel, and had written on the card that he wished to see me as soon as possible. He added that he would be at the English Embassy reception that evening.

I went to the Embassy, and the Prince arrived at about eleven o'clock. My surprise was great indeed when he informed me that Prince Bismarck asked me to dine with him next day at half-past six, in morning dress.

On the 2nd, accordingly, at a quarter-past six, Prince Hohenlohe, as had been arranged, called for me

at the hotel. I was waiting at the door for him, and we went together to the Chancellor's.

I remained there until eleven at night.

I will tell you in the next chapter all about that memorable interview of five hours' duration.

It was one of the very rare ones I have had in my life which did not disappoint me and which even surpassed my expectations.

All that I will mention here is that on the following day, the 3rd of July, every one in Berlin knew that I had dined with the Chancellor, and, as was natural, the attitude of the diplomatists toward me suddenly changed. They made a great deal of me and made overtures to me. I had no further need to ask for information, as the information I required came to me.

This was all the more pleasant as I was not able from this time forth to obtain what I needed from the source which had served me so well at the commencement.

My friend, who had until then been exceedingly prudent, on learning that I had seen the Chancellor in so special a way, assumed airs, and, without betraying me in any way, provoked distrust. From that time he was kept at a distance, and from the 4th of July his hat contained nothing but rueful confessions of his imprudence and bitter regrets at being unable to serve me. I did my utmost to console him, and, though I did not see him again, I learned that he had left Europe and has since succeeded admirably in his enterprises. Still, I lost all chance of having the treaty, though information of the Congress reached me thenceforth, as I have said, without difficulty.

On the 5th of July, a week before the Congress closed,

I was reading in the hall of the Kaiserhof a private letter which had just arrived and which contained the following passage:

"I have watched with delight your campaign in Berlin. You would be crowning that campaign if you were the first to publish the treaty, and I need not tell you with what joy I should see you realise what would be the greatest feat of modern journalism."

At that moment a diplomatist who had always been friendly to me walked through the hall of the hotel. I must have looked downcast, for he came up to me with alacrity and said, "Have you been getting bad news?"

With the instinctive idea of which I have already spoken, and according to which a man's destiny depends on the sagacity with which he seizes the indications given by fate, instead of replying, I showed him the letter. He perused it attentively and then said, turning to me, "So you are absolutely bent on forestalling the publication of the treaty?"

"If I were asked to choose between all the orders and decorations in the world and the treaty, I should select the latter."

"And how are you going to get it?"

"I have just had an assurance that Prince Bismarck is highly satisfied with what I wrote on our conversation, and he thinks I have rendered a service to peace. I am going to ask him to reward me by communicating the treaty to me."

My friend reflected a minute, then exclaimed: "No; do not ask him till you have seen me again. Walk out

to-morrow between one and two in the Wilhelmstrasse, and I will see you."

Next day, on going into the street, he came up to me and hurriedly said, "Come for the treaty the day before the end of the Congress and I promise that you shall have it."

I could scarcely restrain my delight. Now that I was certain of getting the treaty I had a twofold anxiety.

In the first place, the Congress was to terminate on the 13th. The Chancellor had positively said so. It was a Saturday. I should have the treaty on the 12th, and it was necessary at all cost for it to appear on the 13th, for the English papers are not published on Sundays, and Monday would have been too late. Secondly, it was not enough to have the treaty; I must be the only one to have it. The German papers were angry with the Chancellor for not receiving their representatives. I reflected that probably, in order to pacify them, he would give them the treaty, which would thus appear at Berlin on Saturday, and thus I should be beaten. I was in despair. How was I to prevent Prince Bismarck from doing what he chose? How could I telegraph the treaty? It was impossible in Germany or Austria; and as for Paris, it would be too late, for, getting it only on Friday, I could not be in Paris in time for it to be published on Saturday in London.

Finally I came to two decisions: I felt that Brussels was the only place from which to telegraph.

I called on Baron Nothomb, the Belgian Minister at Berlin. I told him that there was an idea of organising a nightly telegraphic service between Brussels and London.

I then asked him to give me a letter for M. Vinchent, the Director-General at Brussels, urging him to telegraph immediately a long message which I might have to forward to London, to prove the speed with which Brussels and London could communicate. He readily gave me the letter.

This reassured me as to telegraphic transmission. There remained the question of preventing anybody else from having the treaty.

After long and elaborate reflection, I hit upon a plan which appeared both simple and rational. I asked Prince Hohenlohe and Count de St. Vallier to ask Prince Bismarck to give me the treaty, and I reasoned thus: The Prince says I have rendered service to peace. I ask him to reward me by giving me the treaty. If he gives it, all will be well; he is not a man to do things by halves. As it is to reward me, he will not give it to anybody else. As he alone can give it to the German press, if I get it I can wait till the end of the Congress, send it on Sunday and have it published on Monday morning. If he refuses me, I am certain he will refuse others. In either case I shall not be forestalled.

Prince Hohenlohe and Count de St. Vallier were good enough to listen to my request.

On the evening of the 11th of July, Prince Hohenlohe informed me that next morning he would communicate to me the Chancellor's answer.

At half-past nine I went for the treaty promised me as above related. It was given me with the exception of the last two articles, which were not to be adopted till the penultimate sitting; and the preamble, entrusted to M. Desprez, had not yet been drawn up.

With the treaty in hand I returned to the Kaiserhof, to await Prince Hohenlohe's answer.

It arrived at ten, and was as follows:

"I much regret being unable to give you a favourable reply, but, considering the ill-humour of the German press, the Chancellor is afraid of irritating it too much by giving you the treaty."

Thereupon I pretended to be very angry. I ordered my luggage to be packed, I asked for my hotel bill, I engaged a compartment in the 12:30 train, and announced that I was leaving without waiting for the last sitting the next day. One of my fellow-correspondents, the most talkative of them all, asked the reason of my sudden departure. I confided to him that I was enraged, that Prince Bismarck, in spite of the service rendered by me, as he himself had qualified it, to peace, had just refused to give me the treaty. I showed him Prince Hohenlohe's letter, and I said that I considered this shameful, and that I would not stop an hour longer in a city where I was treated in such a fashion.

My colleague departed to repeat my words, and all my brethren came to condole with me. My colleague, Mr. Mackenzie Wallace, who had been very devoted to me throughout the Congress, was apprised by my secretary that I was leaving, and that in the interest of the paper I begged him to start with me. I stated that I was going to take leave of the Count de St. Vallier.

I ordered my luggage to be sent to the station where we were to meet Mr. Wallace and my secretary, in the compartment reserved for me.

Count de St. Vallier, then French Ambassador at Berlin, and one of the three Plenipotentiaries at the Congress, was a typical French nobleman. Amiable, elegant, attentive, listening readily, having a natural polish which allowed him to be very gracious without risk of seeming familiar, he had received me with a warmth which touched me. He suffered from indigestion, had to diet himself strictly, lived on milk, and presided with perfect grace over grand banquets at which he could touch nothing. His receptions were one of the charms of the Congress, and no higher compliment can be paid to them than by saying that invitations to attend them were most eagerly sought after.

As he had never ventured to give me information, he had, with all the more alacrity, undertaken with Prince Hohenlohe to submit to my request the failure of which had just been intimated to me.

I called on him at eleven, having asked him to receive me because I was leaving. He advanced with his usual grace, saying:

"I am vexed, believe me, at the failure of our request, but it is useless to dwell upon it. I regret that you take the thing so very much to heart. Remain two days longer. The Congress will be over to-morrow, and, the day after, as simple Ambassador, I could give you retrospective details which would be interesting."

I thanked him, but said I adhered to my plan of departure.

"Pleasant journey, then. What can I do for you?"

"A great deal, Monsieur le Comte. Give me the text of the preamble which M. Desprez must have drawn up and which must be in your hands."

"The preamble, indeed, has just been given to me, but what good can that be to you? You do not want to pretend to know the treaty by publishing the preamble?"

"Give me your word of honour, Monsieur le Comte, to keep my secret for forty-eight hours, and I will explain what use I am going to make of the preamble."

"If it is not contrary to my duty, I promise."

I unfastened my coat and showed him the treaty.

He turned slightly pale on seeing it.

"I regret," he said, "that you have told me the secret, for if the Chancellor asks whether I knew all about this, I shall be forced to confess. In spite of this, though, nothing could have amused me more than this way of seeing our rebuff retrieved," and he laughed heartily. "As to the preamble," he continued, "I cannot let you copy it or give you the text, for I have no other. But sit down. I will read it slowly and aloud. Now is the time to justify your reputation for a wonderful memory."

And taking up the manuscript, he read it slowly and very distinctly.

I thanked him and took leave.

I reached the station a few minutes before the train started. Mr. Mackenzie Wallace was already seated in our compartment. My secretary was waiting on the platform. He told me some of my colleagues were there to bid me farewell.

"And to see if I really start," I remarked.

I assumed a gloomier and sterner air than ever, which allowed me to keep silence; for I was afraid of forgetting the preamble if my attention were diverted by conversation.

At length I was able to enter our compartment and to salute politely the persons who had come to take leave of me.

The train started.

It had not been difficult to see that in the crowd collected on the platform there were people deputed to watch me, and I even perceived that one of them, whom I had noticed during my stay in Berlin, was in the adjoining compartment.

Mr. Wallace, who had taken a really fraternal interest in my Congress labours and had often devotedly facilitated them, was visibly annoyed at my rebuff, and my secretary had an air of consternation which delighted me; for the sincerity of his disappointment must have been obvious to every one.

When we had passed the outskirts of Berlin I said to my secretary, "Take pen and ink; I am going to dictate something." I then dictated the preamble.

When he had written this, I pulled out the treaty. There was a perfect outburst of joy, the sweetest recompense which my efforts could obtain; for I saw that two honest hearts affectionately and unreservedly sympathised with a success achieved with such difficulty.

"Now we are not going to read the treaty," I said to Mr. Wallace. "Here are needles and thread; open your coat; we will sew the treaty and preamble in, so that you will not have to trouble about its safety, and we will append Baron Nothomb's letter to M. Vinchent."

When this was done, I said to Mr. Wallace: "We are evidently being watched, myself more particularly. At the first large station you will leave this compartment

and go into one some way off on the left, for on the right I believe there is some one watching us. I shall pretend not to know you; and you must do the same about me. At Cologne you will take the Brussels train, and you will arrive at five in the morning. You will go straight to the telegraph office. If, as I expect, they refuse to transmit the treaty without higher orders, you must wake up M. Vinchent, present Baron Nothomb's letter, and ask him for the order of transmission."

Things happened just as I had foreseen. Mackenzie Wallace went into another compartment, and we did not approach each other; but at the stations where we alighted I laughed heartily, for, though the treaty was firmly sewed to the lining of his coat, I saw him from time to time put his hand to his heart, as if to assure himself of its safety.

When, on reaching Brussels, he offered the telegrams for the clerk to count the words, the latter explained:

"Why, it is the treaty of Berlin; I cannot undertake to send it."

Wallace thereupon asked to see M. Vinchent. He was in bed. Wallace showed Baron Nothomb's letter and insisted on seeing him. The letter was sent to the Director's house, he was aroused, and a quarter of an hour later he wrote at the foot of the Baron's letter the order of transmission.

At the very hour on the 13th of July when the treaty of 1878 was signed at Berlin, a London telegram announced that the *Times* had published the preamble and sixty-four articles, with an English translation appended.

"How could it have obtained the preamble yesterday morning seeing that it was not drawn up?" asked Prince

Bismarck of Count de St. Vallier. "Was it not you, Count, who gave it?"

M. de St. Vallier had now no reason for keeping the secret any longer, and he was bound to reply without hesitation. He therefore frankly related what had happened.

"And what did he say when you told him?" I asked M. de St. Vallier.

"Excuse me," replied the Count, smiling, "but he did not tell me to repeat it to you."

At Berlin the news of the publication of the treaty caused a great sensation. Many persons immediately set to work to discover from whom I obtained the treaty. I will relate in another part of my memoirs how, five years afterward, the Chancellor tried to make me reveal the secret. Meanwhile, the account I have just given is an authentic narrative of how the treaty fell into my hands. Nothing more will ever be known, and if I have written this much, it is in order that the public may know by what efforts, sacrifices and difficulties, and at the cost of what anxiety, one sometimes succeeds in satisfying its thirst for knowing and forestalling events.

CHAPTER VII

What Bismarck Told Me

I CANNOT truthfully say that I was quite calm and composed on the evening of July 2, 1878, when at half-past six, accompanied by Prince von Hohenlohe, I mounted the pink-and-white flagged staircase leading to the private apartment occupied by Prince Bismarck in Wilhelmstrasse.

For a month past, ever since the European diplomatists had assembled round that table at the Congress of Berlin, I had been wishing for and trying to obtain an interview with the extraordinary man before whose authority every one bowed and who was master of the events of the day. And now, at the last moment, I felt a sort of pang as I wondered whether I was going to be cruelly disappointed and whether all my illusions were about to be destroyed at one blow.

The door of the drawing-room, into which Prince von Hohenlohe and I had been shown, opened and the Chancellor appeared.

He was much taller than I had imagined. I had never seen him except at Madame Tussaud's in London, where there is only a small figure of him, and when I saw this giant in uniform enter the room I was quite taken aback. There was something still more extraordinary about his head. His ears were large, wide open to the hundreds of rumours which came to them

from the four corners of the universe. His chin made a strong foundation for the big jaws, which would certainly never loose anything they held until it was in shreds, whilst his eyes, well set between a projecting eyelid and a well-exposed eyebrow, had a far-away look in them, as though they were gazing out beyond the visible horizon.

The Princess came into the room with the Chancellor. She sat down on a sofa, whilst he sank into an enormous armchair near me.

I had asked Prince von Hohenlohe whether I ought to speak in French or in German, and he had replied that I must wait for the Prince's first words. These first words were in German.

On hearing my reply, the Princess asked inquisitively:

"Do you speak English as well as you do German?"

The Prince interrupted her with a laugh and turned to me.

"I must tell you," he said, "that my wife has a theory that only thin people can talk English well. According to this, neither you nor I will make our mark in that language."

A few moments later we were seated at table in the dining-room. The Prince appeared to be in an excellent humour that evening.

"I saw you yesterday," he said to me, "on foot, in Unter den Linden. You were going into a bazaar. What in the world can a man who comes from Paris want to buy in our bazaars?"

"Your Excellency would be very much more surprised to hear what I was in search of," I replied.

"What was it?"

"A clock! I must ask you to excuse my mentioning

it, but I cannot imagine what has become of all those that were brought from France, for there is not a single one in my hotel!"

The Chancellor laughed heartily at this joke, which was, perhaps, rather *risqué*, and then he immediately began to discuss a more serious subject. He asked me what were the latest impressions of the public on the work of the Congress.

"The Rumanians are not very well pleased, "I replied. "They reckoned on receiving money, which they appear to require badly."

"Oh, well!" said the Prince, with a certain amount of vivacity, "they are not the only ones who need it; every one is in the same condition, and every one is economising. France is the only country which does not hesitate to spend millions on its slightest caprices!"

"Yes," I answered; "and yet it is a curious phenomenon, when one takes into consideration the temperament of the French, to see that these people, who appear to be so thoughtless and so turbulent, should be the most economical people in the world, and that, in their country, saving is organised in such a way that it has become a national theory."

"Oh," interrupted Prince Bismarck, turning toward me, "that is only surprising to those who are in the habit of judging that country by Paris! But there is France and France, the French of Paris and the French of the provinces. The former are immensely vain and amusing, agreeable, wasteful, always ready to knock down the lamp-posts, have revolutions, and declare war. They have nothing to do with economy. The whole world takes money to them and they squander it. But at her

side is the other France, the real France, that of the provinces and of the rural districts—the French who work and labour, who are steady and who economise, and who pay for all the giddy actions, all the follies of the other. When the former bring about a revolution, it is the latter who suffer; when the former declare war, it is the latter who fight. And yet the French of the provinces love their native soil, and their greatest sacrifice is to tear themselves away from it in order to make their military service.

"When I was in France, I was very much interested in the common soldiers, and I often chatted with them. They all of them had one great desire, and that was to finish their military service and return to their fields.

"If one only listened to the French peasant, there would never be any war; and yet, when he does fight, he fights well. When he is beaten he is very much cast down, and when he is victorious he is delighted—there can be no doubt about it; but, conqueror or conquered, the one thing he sees clearly is that victory or defeat will bring the battle to a close and he will then be able to return home."

The conversation then reverted to the Congress. The Prince remarked rather severely:

"The Peace of San Stefano was one of the most thoughtless actions of modern history. Ignatieff made a blunder which no true statesman would ever have committed. He took everything that he could get. When an enemy is vanquished, and one has one's foot on his neck, he can be made to give whatever one wants, but one must think of the consequences of the victory as well as the consequences of the defeat. We should not be where we

now are if, in 1866, I had acted like Ignatieff, if I had taken territory from Austria. At that time every one was against me. I had said when we started: 'If we should be victorious I shall not annex any Austrian territory, for we must not remain enemies forever. In ten or twelve years' time we must be able to come to an understanding with her.' When we were victorious, every one wanted me to take territory from her. I held my own, though, and since then I have often had cause to congratulate myself that I did so."

At these words I could not help looking the Prince in the face, and he at once read in my eyes the question that was on my lips, for without flinching he said:

"I know what you mean: you are thinking about the last war. But in 1871 I acted in the same way. At that time France was in our hands. Paris was conquered, the Commune was brewing, everything was disorganised; and if I had acted like Ignatieff I should have demanded Picardy and Champagne. Now this never occurred to any one; and when I was urged to take Belfort and Metz I refused, saying, 'No, Belfort is in the hands of the French; it must remain theirs.' And even with regard to Metz, on seeing the despair of poor M. Thiers, I hesitated. But, as you know, at the conclusion of a campaign such as that was, one has to take into consideration the military element, and I was obliged to listen to Moltke, who kept repeating to me at every hour of the day, 'Metz in our hands, or in the hands of the French, means a difference of 100,000 men, more or less, in the army.' I could not impose upon my country the burden of putting 100,000 more men into active service at a given moment."

Then, as all this recalled M. Thiers to his mind, the Chancellor continued:

"Ah, the French were not just to poor Thiers! And yet he was a true patriot, and the most striking figure I have hitherto come across in contemporary France. I felt a sort of pity for the poor old man who had travelled through Europe in the midst of a hard winter to beg for help, which it was impossible to obtain, and who kept crossing and recrossing our lines around Paris, fired on by our posts in spite of the strict orders they had received."

The Chancellor stroked his forehead as though trying to recall something, and then continued:

"I remember," he said, "an incident that I shall never forget. We were discussing a question about which we could not come to an understanding. M. Thiers held his own in the most spirited manner possible. M. Jules Favre was pathetic, gesticulating in the most tragic way; but nevertheless no progress was made with our business. All at once I began to talk German. M. Thiers looked at me in amazement.

"'You know we do not understand German,' he said.

"'Certainly,' I replied in French. 'When I am discussing matters with people with whom I believe I can finally come to an understanding, I speak their language, but when I see that it is useless to argue with them I talk my own language. You had better send for an interpreter.'

"To tell the truth, I was in a hurry to conclude matters. For the last week I had been in boiling oil. Every night I expected to be roused by a despatch containing some request from England, Russia, Austria or Italy, in

favour of France. I know, of course, that I should have ignored it, but it would, all the same, have been an indirect intervention in the quarrel between France and Germany. I wanted to avoid this at all costs; that is why, in spite of my admiration for the patriotic persistence of M. Thiers, I had been so brusk in replying in German. The effect of these tactics was very odd. M. Jules Favre threw up his long arms as though appealing to Heaven, and then, with his hair standing on end and his face hidden in his hands, he rushed like a huge bat to a corner of the room, turning his face to the wall as though he did not wish to see the humiliation inflicted upon the representatives of France. M. Thiers looked over his spectacles with a scandalised expression and then trotted off quickly, in a petulant way, to a table at the other end of the room, and I heard his pen scratching away nervously on the paper. After some time he walked toward me. His small eyes were flashing behind his spectacles, his mouth was contracted with anger, and in an abrupt manner he held out the paper to me, saying dryly and in a somewhat hard voice:

"'Is that what you want?'

"I looked at what he had written. It was admirably drawn up, and it was very nearly what I had stipulated. I then spoke French again, and the negotiations were concluded in that language. Thiers, you know, always seemed to me like a big child, but when he was driven to extremities one could preceive how courageous and intelligent he was. He was the very deuce!"

All this was told by Bismarck in the simplest and most natural way, without any posing or seeking for effect. He spoke just as he thought, with a certain familiarity

and perhaps even a certain triviality of language. He was smoking an enormous pipe and sending out thick puffs, and between two stories he would gaze out silently beyond the gardens of Wilhelmstrasse at the setting sun. The Congress and its work was what interested and preoccupied him the most. He referred to it continually and brought every other subject to bear on it. It seemed as though he had endless things to say about it.

"At the Congress," he told me, "there is simply nothing left to desire. M. Waddington, who represents France, is absolutely devoted to his country. He is a modest, straightforward man, who likes work and wishes to understand things thoroughly. I have never seen a more laborious Minister of Foreign Affairs. Every one likes him, and he must have rendered great services to his Government.

"Now one may not be a Republican, but one must admit that there is nothing possible for France at the present day but a republic. If the various Pretenders could come to some agreement I should not perhaps speak in the same way. But if one of them should get into power, he would have all the rest of France against him; that would mean civil war immediately, and civil war in France is like having the plague at one's door.

"I admire Shuvaloff at the Congress. He has to hold his own against every one. They are all after him; he is like a stag under pursuit that shows its horns when too hard pressed. Neither Gortchakoff nor Von Oubril are of any great assistance to him; yet he is most polite, ever a gentleman, never making any mistakes, and always commencing with a polite formula, such as

'Prince, may I be allowed to say a word in reply, etc.' He is certainly a typical diplomatist. Shuvaloff and Beaconsfield are the two principal figures of this Congress, and I am perfectly charmed to have the opportunity of observing them.

"Beaconsfield has the most extraordinary presence of mind. He is accommodating and energetic, and never allows himself to be disturbed by anything. He defends his cause admirably, and last Friday, when the negotiations were broken off, he was ready to lead his country courageously to war. It was then that I intervened. He and Shuvaloff have both done their duty, and they have both saved their country from war. Personally, my only merit is that of having brought them together at a moment when it was no longer possible for them to approach each other again.

"Two years ago, when I saw Beaconsfield for the first time, I said to him: 'Why are you opposed to Russia? You might come to an understanding with her. It would be to the interest of both countries. Why do you not take Egypt? France would not bear you any ill-will on that account for very long. Besides, you could give her a compensation—Tunis or Syria, for instance—and then Europe would at last be free from this question of Turkey, which is constantly bringing her within an ace of a fresh war.' Beaconsfield did not reply, but I saw that my words had not fallen on a deaf ear."

The Prince stopped and there was a long silence. It was getting late, and a neighbouring clock struck eleven slowly and deliberately. Prince von Hohenlohe rose, as a signal for our departure, and I did likewise. Prince Bismarck laid his pipe down on a small table specially

M. DE BLOWITZ AS OFTEN SEEN IN THE STREETS OF PARIS, WITH HIS NIECE

[From a photograph made during the last year of his life]

designed for that purpose and, turning to me, held out his large hand.

"Adieu!" he said, in a rough and at the same time melancholy way. "You generally reside in Paris, so I do not think we shall see each other again for some time. But I am very glad to have made your acquaintance, and I think you will be on my side as long as you are convinced that I wish for peace."

Just as I was going out of the room the Chancellor asked me if I would not have another cigar. I accepted the cigar, and was once more moving toward the door, when he stopped me and insisted on lighting it for me himself; and he held the match for about a minute. My cigar was lighted at last, and I went away. The interview—an interview which had lasted five hours—was at an end.

CHAPTER VIII

Gambetta and Bismarck.

During the historical conversation the principal points of which I have faithfully retraced in the preceding chapter, Bismarck touched upon many subjects, just as they occurred to him. He spoke of diplomacy and of war, of the Congress and of Europe, of French statesmen and even of French literature, and one name was frequently mentioned by the Chancellor—that of Gambetta.

The celebrated tribune was then at the very height of his glory. His big voice frequently crossed the frontiers, and its echo could be heard in foreign countries. He possessed that formidable and much-envied power of appearing to incarnate in himself a whole country, a whole democracy. In the French Republic he played the part of Dictator.

"Gambetta," said Prince Bismarck to me after a pause, "is a man I should like to see before I die. In spite of all that one hears to the contrary, he is a really remarkable character. He soars above his compatriots. I'm told that he is fascinating, and yet fascinating men are never supposed to be good statesmen."

"M. Thiers told me once," I remarked, laughing, "that Your Highness was fascinating, and yet you have the reputation of being a great statesman!"

"I have not that reputation—in Germany," replied the Chancellor, and then, going back to his first idea, he said:

"Yes, I certainly should not like to die until I have seen Gambetta."

His insistence on this point struck me. Prince von Hohenlohe, who was then Ambassador at Paris, and Baron von Holstein, *attaché* to the Minister of Foreign Affairs at Berlin and the Chancellor's confidant, accompanied me on my way back to the Kaiserhof. As we passed in front of the gardens of the Radziwill Palace, I said to them:

"I cannot think it was only by chance that Prince Bismarck twice mentioned his wish to see Gambetta. He knows that I am acquainted with him and that I may see him on my return to Paris. He did not tell me not to repeat what he said, and he praised Gambetta in such a way that it appeared as if he were entrusting me with a graceful message. I do not know the Prince as well as you do, but it seems to me that we ought to arrange an interview. I might pave the way, and you, Prince, might take part in the negotiations."

Prince von Hohenlohe, according to his custom when an idea interested him, looked down on the ground and then, after a moment's silence, smiled at me approvingly.

As to Baron von Holstein, he merely remarked:

"Let me have forty-eight hours for reflection, and then I will give you an answer with a thorough knowledge of the matter."

Whenever he had any important decision to make, Baron von Holstein always asked for forty-eight hours' reflection. He employed them in discovering the opinion and desires of his master, so that his reply was in reality Bismarck's. Two days later, as if by accident, he passed by the Kaiserhof. I was at the door talking, and we strolled along together.

"Well," I said, laughing, "are you in a position to answer me yet?"

"Yes," he replied.

He admitted that the Chancellor had persisted in talking about Gambetta in order to see whether I would undertake to open negotiations for bringing about an interview between the two statesmen. He even added that the interview might easily take place at Kissingen, where the Chancellor was prolonging his sojourn.

"You will understand," he continued, in a solemn tone, "that this interview is a serious matter, and that all the possible consequences must be well weighed before any arrangements are concluded. The Chancellor has the firm conviction, and that conviction has grown stronger since he has spoken with you, that M. Gambetta is destined before long to become a great power in France, and that that power will be of a most decisive character. The Chancellor desires peace, and he would like to meet the man on whom may depend in the near future the rupture or the maintenance of peace. He hopes by this interview to acquire some knowledge of the private ideas of M. Gambetta, no matter how skilfully the latter may endeavour to conceal them. That, of course, is neither your business nor mine. Everything that takes place between these two men must have a most conciliatory character; the interview must not appear like a passage of arms. The past must be the past. These men have fought against each other, each one for his own country. All that has happened belongs now to the past—the present undertaking is in view of the future. If this interview should take place, everything must be averted which might alter the character of it or interfere with the

object in view. No overture must be made which might lead to a refusal on the part of one of these personages or to a rebuff for the other. There must be no question, as you will readily understand, of any compromise, of any retrocession, of any modification of existing treaties. In brief, there must be no question of Alsace-Lorraine.

"It must be clearly understood that neither Prince Bismarck, nor the Emperor, nor any other person, could allow the conversation to turn upon the subject. The German nation would not accept any discussion, even an academic one, of accomplished facts which caused German blood to be shed and which strewed France with the corpses of German soldiers. An interview between these two men, animated by pacific intentions and impressed by the duties which are incumbent on them, may bring about a salutary result, if they do not seek for the personal satisfaction of triumphing over each other."

The conversation continued for some little time and then we separated.

. . . . . .

On my return to Paris, toward the month of August, 1878, I wrote to M. Gambetta, asking him for an interview, and this interview, the only one he ever granted to a journalist, took place forty-eight hours later. M. Gambetta received me in the editor's office of his newspaper, *La République Française*, a large room which looked onto a flight of stone steps opposite the entrance to the Rue de la Chaussée d'Antin. He greeted me very cordially and was extremely agreeable, for he was anxious to find out exactly what had taken place in Berlin.

I proved to him easily enough how prejudicial was the

policy of his paper, which, for causes it would take too long to enumerate here, had shown itself violently hostile to the French Plenipotentiaries who were representing their country at a great international congress—the first held since the terrible Franco-Prussian War. I was fortunate enough to see him come round to my opinion.

When I had finished this part of my conversation, I introduced the second part—the interview with the Chancellor.

M. Gambetta, I must confess, was very pleased. He also had a certain fascination about him which one would never imagine on seeing him in ordinary, everyday life, and he now proved to be quite irresistible. He appeared to be delighted at the prospect of an interview, and declared that the results he anticipated from it would be beneficial and fruitful to all parties.

I listened to him with infinite pleasure. His words were brimming over with the most ardent patriotism, which inspired me with a veritable admiration for him, and he did not conceal the satisfaction he felt at the idea of being able at last to meet the man on whom depended, perhaps, the future peace of the whole of Europe. Finally, turning to me, he asked:

"But how, in the event of this interview, do you suppose I should be able to approach the great question which preoccupies us and about which we are at variance?"

I had foreseen this dread point, and I answered:

"This first interview, I think, is only to have a preliminary character. As far as I understand, there must be nothing said on this initial occasion about the lost provinces. All that must be reserved for later interviews,

in order that a denial may be given to those who declare —with a view to stirring up public opinion—that the question of Alsace-Lorraine has been discussed."

"That," he said promptly, "is absolutely impossible. I cannot approach the German Chancellor without speaking to him of Alsace-Lorraine. If I were to be silent on that subject it would spoil our whole conversation, and he would feel, too plainly, that he had a man before him who did not say what he thought and who did not think what he said!"

"Well," I replied, "instead of talking to him of Alsace-Lorraine, you might speak of Alsace and of Lorraine, and in that way lessen the problem by dividing it."

"Oh," said M. Gambetta, "I don't fancy that would alter much!"

He thought the matter over for a minute in silence, and then, like a man who had made up his mind, he rose and held out his hand to me:

"I should consider it my duty and an honour," he said, somewhat ceremoniously, "to be able to approach the Chancellor and to endeavour with him to solve the problem of European peace and happiness. But in order to attain that end, when we approach each other we must have in view the tranquillity of humanity, and not personal success; that is why I must be able to speak to him not of Alsace and of Lorraine, but of Alsace-Lorraine!"

The following day I called on Prince von Hohenlohe, to whom I repeated the conversation and resigned my offices as negotiator.

There was never again any question of an interview between Prince Bismarck and M. Gambetta.

CHAPTER IX

Alva

General de Galliffet once announced that for the last forty years he had been taking daily notes, and he thereupon began the publication in two Parisian papers of fragments of these notes. These fragments, by an odd coincidence, contained, every now and then, blunders in dates which did not escape the attention of his readers.

I desire to say to readers of these memoirs that I have never in my life taken many notes as to the events in which I have been mixed up, and that consequently nothing would be more natural than that I should from time to time make certain errors of dates like General de Galliffet. But I attach no importance to a possibility of this sort, my chief concern being with the accuracy of the facts which I relate.

I nevertheless remember as if it were yesterday that on September 5, 1878, under the arcades of the Rue de Rivoli, I met my dear old friend, Hector Pessard, coming out of one of the big hotels that abound in that street. M. Hector Pessard was then the manager and editor-in-chief of the *National*. When he took the paper over, it was on the point of disappearing altogether, but he rapidly made it one of the most important organs of the moment in Paris. The *National* belonged in truth to that class of Parisian newspapers which bud, bloom and die. During my long experience as a journalist, which

has lasted nearly one-third of a century, I have seen born, grow up and perish so many newspapers that as I look back upon them my memory resembles those old Norman churches surrounded by a cemetery into which one enters without knowing exactly whether the ceremony one goes to witness is to be a baptism, a marriage or a funeral.

"Ah!" said M. Hector Passard to me, "I am delighted to meet you, for my intention was to go and see you. You are only just back from the Berlin Congress; you are sailing on the top of the wave; your name is constantly under the public eye; it is well known that the Prime Minister, M. Dufaure, has had a long conversation with you on what took place at the Berlin Congress. You are what is called 'the man of the day,' and you will not be surprised, therefore, if I ask you to come with me and call on Madame Marsa Chamil, who lives in this hotel. I have promised her that you shall go to see her."

"But in the first place," I replied, "I am, as you say, for the time being, very much occupied; and secondly, who is Madame Marsa Chamil, whose name I now hear for the first time?"

"*Mon Dieu!*" exclaimed Hector Pessard, "I will be frank. I don't know much more about her than you. It is in a certain measure in order to find out that we all, Henri de Péne and his wife, Francis Magnard, Henri Fouquier and the others, would like you to see her, for we suppose that with your knowledge of all that is going on behind the scenes in European society you will assist us in deciphering the very interesting enigma which she appears to be. We generally call her the Duchess, and she accepts the name with a smile, because

everything belonging to her in this hotel—the table linen, the china, the glass and the silver, and all the rare and curious bibelots—are marked with a ducal crown, and attest great wealth and elegance."

"And what sort of a woman is this Duchess?"

"She is under forty, charming, a tall, graceful brunette, although perhaps not a descendant of any very ancient family, speaks several languages correctly, knows the upper circles in most continental countries, spends a great deal of money, has a very smart team and respectful, well-trained servants; entertains freely and with taste and refinement, pays her bills regularly and promptly, has the most fashionable dressmakers, goes out little, talks of men and things with much knowledge and insight, but rarely of herself, and never speaks ill of others. Finally, she has with her a young lady named Alva, of whom one gets only rare and furtive glimpses, a girl of eighteen, absolutely well-bred, whom the Duchess calls 'my child,' a fact which authorises one to suppose that she is her daughter."

"Really," I replied, "you arouse my curiosity keenly, but I am bound to tell you that I am curious only by profession, caring little to know what I cannot repeat publicly. But what you have just said renders it impossible for me to refuse to make the visit you propose, so, if you will allow me, as soon as I have a little more liberty I will send you word and we will go together to call upon the Duchess."

Were I to relate all the traps which hatred or jealousy or mere spite have laid for me, for more than thirty years, all the columns of a newspaper would not suffice. I will mention, therefore, only a single one in order to give

readers an idea of the methods employed to catch me off my guard and to involve me in irremediable complications.

When the second Dreyfus trial broke out, I beheld one day entering my home a man still young, who appeared to be quite out of breath, and whose expression was that of a person in trouble. He related that he was a married man and a father, that he held a confidential position at the War Office, that he had just met with heavy losses at the gaming table, and that, in exchange for a sum that would help him to save his reputation, he would supply me with military documents of the highest importance. I discovered later on that this man had been sent to me by powerful enemies, solely in order to try to implicate me in that wretched affair.

I say this in order to explain the precautions which I took in the matter that I am now narrating, and why, a few days after my meeting with M. Hector Pessard, I called on the manager of the hotel where the Duchess was staying—a man who was under some obligations to me and who always showed much deference toward me—with a view of obtaining more detailed information about the Duchess than M. Hector Pessard had imparted to me.

The manager of the hotel placed himself immediately at my service.

"The Duchess," said he, "has been residing here for the past eleven months. There is evidently a little mystery about her, but I should not be telling the truth if I did not add that, apart from this instinctive and justifiable feeling that one has, there is nothing to be said against her, and her entire bearing and attitude give rise to no criticism. Five or six days before her arrival one

of the leading employees of a well-known bank came to choose the suite of rooms she now occupies. He selected an apartment on the third floor, so that the visitors should not be troubled by the noise of the street. Their suite looks out on the Tuileries gardens and is composed of a drawing-room, dining-room, two bedrooms for herself and her daughter, a 'study,' and three small rooms for her butler and her two lady's maids, who live on the same floor. On the first of the month the butler, who appears to be a highly respectable old servant, takes a cheque to the bank I have mentioned, and with the utmost regularity the Duchess, on his return, settles her bills here. She has never kept us waiting a single day. Her valet, who acts as a general man-servant, lives at the stables outside the hotel. The Duchess rarely goes out, receives only highly honourable visitors—more men than women, that is true—but men who for the most part are well known here as well as elsewhere. She shops a great deal, almost always in the same establishments. Her dressmakers are well known and she habitually pays immediately for all that is brought to her; and she is regarded, owing to her long stay here and the regularity of her orders and payments, as a valuable patron. She has more than once asked for her bills before they were presented. I calculate, without having been guilty of any misplaced curiosity, that this lady must have more than 200,000 francs a year to spend, and all I hope is that she will remain here as long as possible, for, I repeat, neither the prosperity nor respectability of the hotel has to regret her presence."

The next day I wrote to M. Pessard to tell him that I was at his disposal for any date he would like to fix,

and on September 14, at four in the afternoon, I went with my friend to call on Madame Marsa Chamil, who had invited us to tea.

The portrait of the Duchess had been well portrayed to me by M. Pessard. As I entered she rose from the armchair in which she was sitting, and greeted me very amiably without offering me her hand, afterward begging me to take a chair. She began in the most natural way in the world to talk of the events of the day, of the crisis of May 16, 1877, the solution of which she had witnessed almost immediately on her arrival in Paris, and of the fall of M. Jules Simon, for whom she had a letter of introduction which she had refrained from presenting on learning that since his defeat he had no inclination to receive strangers. She then talked of the statesmen whom I had seen at the Berlin Congress; of Count Andrassy, who was so characteristically the type of the Magyar race, nervous, breezy and hale, as if his ruddiness had been caught under the sun of his native forests; of Count von Haymerlé, so refined and elegant, subtle and active, but for whom people predicted a brief career because his incessant activity was like a tongue of fire that devoured his constitution; of Kara Théodori, the melancholy representative of a decadent power, who had haunted the diplomatic *salons* of Berlin like a silent and furtive shade, remaining timidly in the background, for he was somewhat bashful and the interests he upheld were most confused and precarious. She then spoke to me of Prince Bismarck, whom she had certainly met, for, quite naturally, in repeating a conversation which she had had, she imitated in a respectful but amusing way his habit of stopping suddenly and without embarrassment in the

midst of a phrase and of remaining quite silent until he had found the exact word which he wanted. She spoke tome, finally, but with great discretion, without flattery and without exaggeration, of the rôle that I had played in Berlin and of certain episodes of my sojourn there, which would almost have led me to believe that she had seen me in Berlin, if I had not been aware that she had not absented herself from Paris for a whole year.

I was, during this visit, struck by the intellectual superiority of this woman who, during our conversation, had made use of several languages, which she seemed to know perfectly well and which she spoke with an accent that belonged to none of them, without my being able exactly to discover to what nationality it was due. I saw perfectly well that this first visit would not be the last, for from the outset I felt for the Duchess, whom I had just seen for the first time, a really sympathetic curiosity; and I made a firm resolve, without any vulgar or hidden motive, to try to penetrate into her intimacy and to get at the meaning of the very real mystery which, so to speak, floated in the ambient air surrounding her.

There had been, on this occasion, besides M. Pessard and myself, three or four persons with whom she knew that I was acquainted, and to whom, therefore, she did not feel obliged to introduce me; but, among two or three others, she introduced to me a young man, of easy and elegant manners and of real distinction, as the Prince Karageorgewitch, and as the question of the future Prince of Bulgaria was then being discussed, she added a few words which appeared to indicate that this young man was regarded by some persons as among the candidates for that dignity. In brief, I took leave of the Duchess

with the sensation that my visit had been one of the most interesting which I had made for some time past. From that day, I went to see her almost regularly for more or less long calls two or three times a week. I was more and more impressed by her superior intelligence, her good breeding, and by the accuracy of her opinions and reflections; and while noting that, in spite of my constant attention, I had not succeeded in piercing the somewhat impenetrable veil enveloping her, I remained convinced that I was dealing neither with an adventuress nor with a woman capable of a dishonest act; and my sympathy for her grew apace without my ignorance in regard to her being a whit diminished.

One evening, in December, it was a little late when I made my call, and I found her alone. She said to me:

"Let me introduce you to my dear child, Alva, whom you do not yet know, and, so that you may become better acquainted with her, you will, if possible, share our dinner, for we are dining alone to-night."

At my movement of assent she rang and told Hugot, the butler, to ask mademoiselle to come to her in the drawing-room. The introduction was brief, for Alva seemed to have been apprised fairly accurately as to the person now introduced to her, and, contrary to the custom of the Duchess, she immediately extended her hand in a cordial and almost familiar way. Alva was a great beauty, elegantly slender, of harmonious proportions, with hands and feet of perfect distinction, and she was dressed with refined and irreproachable simplicity. She had a delicate little head, a rather brilliant complexion, a superb forehead, hair of the purest and most wavy gold, and eyes of that greenish blue which characterises the

women of the North, and which, under eyebrows finely arched and beneath long brown lashes, seemed readily to change their colour and, according to the impressions they reflected, became more azure-hued and more profound.

Aïva bade me welcome, and as it was late I asked to be allowed to return home in order to dress. At dinner, the girl expressed herself in perfectly pure French without the slightest accent. She, too, knew English, German, Spanish and a little Russian. She had the experience of her age, for she was not yet eighteen, but she showed an exact and penetrating intelligence and a judgment both firm and indulgent. During dinner the Duchess told me that she had that day been informed that the young man whom I had seen at her house, and whom she had called Prince Karageorgewitch, was accustomed to call himself by that name, but he in no way belonged, as he claimed, to the princely family of Servian pretenders. I took this opportunity to tell her that she ought to be extremely circumspect as to the choice of her habitual guests, and that, without wishing to mention any names, there were among them certain persons who gave rather an unfavourable impression, and this influenced people in their judgment in regard to her. She thanked me warmly, and, with that energy which always distinguished her, told me, on my next visit, that she had closed her door to some of her usual visitors, whose names she mentioned. This proved to me that she had very accurately judged the persons whom she was bound to exclude from her society.

In these pages I intend to relate an event which deserves to figure in my personal reminiscences, but I

do not wish, by giving details not directly bearing upon this story, to lengthen needlessly the tale which I am now narrating. So I shall not speak of the visits which ensued, nor of the incidents that occurred during the three or four months following upon the first dinner of the Duchess at which I was present. What I can say, and what I feel bound to say, is that my attachment to these two women increased as I began to know them better, and it rapidly developed into veritable friendship. Both of them, each in her own way, were calculated to captivate: the one by the remarkable maturity of her superior and cultivated intelligence, her upright conduct, her native penetration and rare knowledge of men and things, of which for the most part she made no display, but which became evident whenever she took pains to analyse her thoughts; the other, Alva, by her youthful radiance, her eloquence and simplicity, her gentle and fascinating melancholy, and by the intellectual precocity that was so noticeable whenever—which was rare—she chanced to take part in the conversation.

About the end of April, 1879, however, it seemed to me that a significant change was taking place in the existence of these two women. The mother was more nervous and irritable; more reserved than heretofore. The quivering of her nostrils and the way in which she knit her brows betrayed now and then her excitement; her lips, previously so apt to smile, had strange twitchings; and she gave her orders more sharply and imperiously than was her wont. The girl, on such occasions, gave her mother an anxious and melancholy look, and more than once I noticed that her lashes were wet with a quickly suppressed tear. The change disturbed me,

but such was the attitude of these two women that I should have thought it indiscreet to display the slightest anxiety. This state of things continued and even became more accentuated. It was, to be sure, purely a moral impression I had, for, apart from what I have noted, there had been no alteration in the style in which the Duchess lived. She received at the same hours exactly in the same manner as before; she went out as usual, did her shopping and errands as before; and the hotel servants, when she came down into the court-yard to enter her brougham or her open carriage, bowed with the same respect as they had always shown, as she passed. I was much perplexed by all this, and such was now my friendship for these two ladies that I could not help feeling real anxiety. I suffered at being kept in the dark with regard to their troubles. This situation, which was so painful to me, continued until nearly the middle of June, and as I thought that my visits caused sometimes a painful embarrassment I began to go less frequently, and, in spite of the real privation that I felt, I now remained at times almost a week without calling on the Duchess.

Toward the middle of June, during one of the rare visits which I then made them, I tried, by cordial phrases, to attenuate my indiscretion in coming to see them, when the Duchess suddenly seemed to want to enter upon a conversation of a confidential character. She exclaimed:

"I must tell you——"

Just then her eyes fell upon Alva. I cannot say what she read upon the girl's face, but she stopped short, and, as she appeared to have grown somewhat nervous, I hastily got up and took leave of her. As I crossed the

hotel court the manager appeared in the doorway of his office, as though he wanted to speak to me. I went to meet him and he asked me into his room. He shut the door and said:

"You must excuse me, sir, for what I am going to tell you, but a few months ago, before you knew the Duchess, you asked for accurate information in regard to her, which I gave you; since then you have become, in the eyes of the Duchess and her daughter, the real friend of the house. I feel bound to tell you, for it seems to me to be a duty, that during the last two months certain things have been going on here which will perhaps seem to you, as they do to me, disquieting. Since the first of May this lady has neither asked for nor settled her hotel bill, which amounts to-day to about eighteen thousand francs. She has made many purchases and, contrary to her custom, has not paid for them immediately, but has even sent back some of the bills, asking for a delay; and if I am not mistaken, the Duchess, during the two and a half months in which this change has been taking place, must have become indebted to the extent of more than fifty thousand francs, for, as often happens in cases of the kind, she has bought some new things in order to defer payment of those for which she already owes. I must even add that for some time now I see, hovering about the hotel, personages who appear to be spying on her; that I have received the visit of an official who came to make a detailed inquiry as to the Duchess and her daughter; and that this lady's servants appear worried. It seemed to me I ought to inform you of all this lest you should be surprised by some event which might annoy you."

It will readily be understood that I was impressed and

disturbed by this communication. I passed a bad night, and the next morning wrote to the Duchess asking her to receive me at three o'clock.

At that hour I arrived at her house. I was ushered in and found her alone. With a great deal of precaution and considerable apprehension I explained to her that I felt it my duty to repeat to her what the manager of the hotel had said to me. She listened to me in silence. Two big tears ran down her cheeks.

"What the manager of the hotel has told you," she said, after a pause, "is true. For three months now I have been completely without funds. I thought, and still think, that I shall get my money back. I did not wish to change my way of living—in the first place, out of pride, which you will understand; secondly, not to alarm Alva. The time has come, though, to tell you what you do not yet know, and what on more than one occasion I have intended to tell you, without, however, daring to do so. Among all the persons I have known, you are the one who has shown me the most serious, the most sincere and the most disinterested sympathy; and you are the one in whom Alva and I feel the most confidence and for whom we cherish the greatest friendship. I am going, therefore, to tell you everything, and you can then judge whether you should respond to the appeal which I am going to make to you.

"Alva, whom I call my child, is not my daughter. She belongs to a royal house; she is the daughter of a princess, and the explanation of the ducal crown visible on everything belonging to us here is that most of these objects come from her mother, and that Alva, in reality, if not by right, can claim the crown. She was born when her

mother was only eighteen years old. Alva is remarkably like her mother, who was very beautiful. Her father was a captain in an Austrian regiment garrisoned in the Germanic confederation. I was her maid of honour. When I heard of the affair, her suffering attached me to her more than ever, and after having been her *confidante* I became her accomplice. We wept long over the situation together. Finally, an idea came to me which simplified the whole situation, and I felt that I had found a way of saving her, I will even say of saving us, for, if the truth became known, I was in as much danger as she was, and perhaps even more. Without telling her my plan, I went to one of the Court physicians for whom I entertained the greatest admiration. Unhesitatingly, and after he had promised to keep my disclosure a secret, I told him all I know.

"Doctor Alven—we will call him thus, for it was under that name that he took, later on, all the necessary steps—Doctor Alven listened in silence, and when I had finished said:

"'Tell Madame that she must not appear to-night at dinner; that she must go to bed and complain of violent headaches and of great difficulty in breathing. Then, to-morrow morning early let her send for me to visit her. Do not worry. I hope that I shall find a way to save you both.'

"Doctor Alven ordered her to take a potion. The consequence of this draught was that the face of the unfortunate Princess became violently red and a heavy fever ensued. Our rescuer submitted her to this treatment for two weeks. He directed me to stay with her, because she wanted to be nursed only by me. Two

weeks later, the Court having meanwhile been greatly alarmed, and with the exaggeration habitual in such cases having announced her death on the sixteenth day, at Doctor Alven's request and by order of the Sovereign there was a consultation of physicians. The father of the Princess was present, and the doctors adopted Doctor Alven's suggestion, declaring that the only way of saving her was, first, to send her away to the south of France, and then, accompanied by a young doctor recommended by Alven, to have her travel in Algeria, Cairo, the Canary and the Balearic Islands.

"Doctor Alven declared that he would give the Princess certain potions which, in spite of her weak condition, would enable her to start, adding, in order that the illness should not give rise to any alarming rumours, that she must leave without any sort of ostentation and travel incognito.

"Doctor Alven's plans were adopted, and three days later in the evening we set out, under the most favourable circumstances possible, accompanied by Hugot, the butler, who is still with me, by the young doctor, who left us a little later, and by the two lady's maids, who are still in our service.

"We left immediately for one of the estates belonging to the Princess beyond the frontier, a domain which came to her direct from one of her aunts. It had not long been at her disposal, as she had only a short time attained her majority, and on that occasion her father had reduced by half the personal appanage which she enjoyed.

"On reaching our destination the Princess sent for the official who governed the district and the functionary who dealt with all matters pertaining to the attestation

of contracts. In their presence the Princess had an act drawn up in which she authorised her steward, assisted by the Governor of the district, to make a transfer, upon an order signed by her, of her entire property, and to convert the sum thus obtained into paper, consols, Government annuities, municipal bonds and railway shares, according to Doctor Alven's indications. All this property when realised was, at the Princess's orders, to be entrusted by the Governor of the district and the steward, acting conjointly, to the person indicated by the Princess in the two orders which she proposed to send them.

"I will not needlessly lengthen this story. We made all the peregrinations that had been planned for us, until finally the Princess was conducted into a Hungarian convent, the Superioress of which was a sister of Doctor Alven. The Princess and I were installed with our servants and the Doctor in a cottage at a remote corner of the convent park, where there was a private entrance, and where we lived well removed from curious eyes, even from those of the nuns. As the convent was the seat of the head of the order, and sent out nuns on missions in all directions, whenever one of them left she was ordered, on reaching her destination, to post letters to the Court, so that it should appear as though we were still travelling.

"When the young Doctor left us to return to the Court, he announced that the Princess, now completely recovered, was coming home. The child, a girl, was inscribed on the convent registers simply under the name of Alva, the Princess herself having chosen the name out of gratitude to Doctor Alven. The Superior found a nurse for her, and a few months later nurse and child were intro-

duced into the convent, the latter passing for a daughter of a niece of the Superior.

"My dear and unfortunate mistress wept bitterly when she was told that she must live separated from her child. I did my best to console her, promising that she should see her shortly and that, with Alven's aid, we would return before long to the convent.

"Two months later, early in 1862, we returned to the Court. No one there had the slightest suspicion of what had occurred. The young Doctor had said nothing on account of his professional duty. The devotion of the three servants amounted to heroism, and Doctor Alven avoided any step that could have given rise to a suspicion of there being anything special between him and us.

"Eleven years elapsed. The Princess had found it impossible to undertake the journey she longed to make. Alva had been separated from her nurse, and she continued to be educated at the convent in the most perfect manner possible. She was loved there, all the nuns doing their best to contribute to her intellectual and physical development.

"Great political changes had taken place meanwhile. Austria had come forth from the Germanic confederation. The war of 1870–71 had altogether modified the confederated sovereignties of Germany. The Princess, who possessed a fairly important appanage, and also, as I have said, estates abroad which she had inherited from one of her aunts, was more eager than ever to realise her property, which, transformed into paper, would have a value of more than five millions of francs. She was bent on leaving her country and taking refuge with Alva in a

foreign land, whence it would be impossible to compel her to return.

"Alas! just then a terrible misfortune befell us. Our presence in the convent, which we had fancied absolutely unknown to any one, had been witnessed by the gardener—the park-keeper, who never penetrated into the convent, but who lived in a small house at the farther extremity of the grounds, a house which, like our own, possessed an independent entrance. His attention had been drawn to what went on in our cottage. He had played the spy and discovered everything save our identity.

"Unfortunately, one of the nuns who had been sent out of the convent on a mission and had imperfectly understood her instructions in regard to posting one of the Princess's letters, entrusted it to the gardener whom she met as she was leaving. He, suspecting that there was some relation between this letter and the mystery of the cottage, did not hesitate an instant to read it. The address, the signature and the contents of it gave him the key to the whole mystery. This man, I cannot say why, had just been brutally deprived of his place, and without the slightest hesitation he resolved to take his revenge in revealing to the Princess's father the mystery that he had discovered.

"The latter's indignation was terrible. He had an attack and his life was in danger. At 11 P. M. Doctor Alven was sent for, and he took all the necessary measures to prevent the father in his wrath from revealing the secret, for the Doctor had just become aware of the frightful danger with which we were menaced.

"Without a minute's delay he went to see the Princess,

awoke Hugot, and ordered the maids to awaken the Princess and myself.

"We immediately prepared to receive the Doctor. He communicated to us the terrible news. He informed us that it was particularly against me that the Sovereign's exasperation was directed, and said that, accompanied by Hugot and by the two maids, for whom he dreaded a terrible punishment, I must flee without losing a moment. On leaving, he informed us that an hour later his landau, with two of his best horses, would await us at a side door, and that we should be driven across the frontier, which was only nine miles away.

"Hugot and the two maids, who were cool and collected through all this, had quickly prepared, in several bags, everything of which I stood in immediate need, and I, on my part, collected all my jewels and all the silver that the Princess and I possessed.

"It was 4 A. M. when we started, and it was hardly five o'clock when we had crossed the frontier. As the first anticipated action taken against the Princess would be the kidnapping of Alva without a minute's delay, armed with a letter from Alven I set out for the convent, where I immediately saw the Superioress. Two hours later Alva—to whom some years before I had paid a visit of several days on the pretext of visiting, during a holiday, an estate of mine on the Danube—was entrusted to my care.

"Alva, who, save the nuns, had never seen any one but myself, and who knew all the tenderness I felt for her—Alva vaguely, so to speak, believed that I was her mother. She flung herself effusively into my arms and was glad to go with me.

"We settled down, with Hugot and the two maids, on my estate. It was in an independent country and I knew we were quite safe. I devoted myself to Alva's education, having at my disposal more than adequate resources sent to me by the steward from the abundant revenues of the Princess's lands; and we lived there for some years, pending the events which were to bring to us the solution of the painful situation in which we found ourselves."

"Meanwhile terrible scenes were being enacted at the Court. The reigning Prince, on being apprised of what he called the disgrace of his house, was in such a paroxysm of wrath that he himself, so deprived was he of all common sense, did not dare to face his daughter, the Princess.

"The miserable informer, the gardener, immediately after having told his tale in the presence of the Prince, had been imprisoned. He was now sent for and obliged to sign a declaration which might involve a death sentence for him. An important sum of money was given to him, he was taken to Bremen under good escort, and sent off to one of the American States, with orders never, under pain of death, either to reveal a word of what he knew or to return to Europe. Moreover, several months ago, Alven informed me that news had been received of his death.

"Immediately after his departure, the Prince, who had been informed of the exact whereabouts of Alva, had sent three men, on whose loyalty and decision he could rely, to kidnap her. As you know, they arrived too late. But the unfortunate Princess was the object of the most monstrous persecution. All her attendants had been changed. Her two maids were two jailers, who never allowed her out of their sight, and who passed

their time in torturing her. Her health suffered greatly. Partial paralysis set in. At her request Alven was sent for. The Doctor asked to be left alone with her, and his request was granted. He did not conceal from her that she was nearing her end. She displayed real heroism. Her only sorrow was at not seeing her child. She made all the necessary arrangements, and entrusted to the Doctor a copy of the document which she had had drawn up for the sale of her property, and the order to convert it into securities which, in case of her death, were to be given to me. At a second visit of the Doctor, who declared to her that she could never undertake another journey, she wrote to me with his aid that, when her landed property had been converted and the securities entrusted to me, she begged me to go with Alva to London, taking the securities with me, to deposit them in one of the large English banks which she named, and to use the revenue for the common benefit of Alva and myself until God should allow her to join us.

"The question of the sale and transfer of her property took some time, for there was great need of discretion, and it was only toward the middle of 1875 that the steward and the Governor of the district brought me the product of the sale in two immense boxes, accompanied with a duplicate of the contents.

"The total amounted to a little more than £200,000, which gave an annual income of £9,000, or about £750 a month.

"We left my estate several days later, and I went quietly away with my dear Alva to London under an assumed name. I deposited the securities in my name in the bank indicated, and whilst awaiting the time when

the Princess could travel and join us, we devoted our days, and a certain portion of our revenues, to completing and perfecting the education of Alva, to whom thus far I had avoided revealing her origin.

"Alas! Alva could not long endure the English climate, and just when, with her consent, I was planning to go to spend the winter in Cairo or Algiers, there reached us the painful news of the death of my dear and beloved Princess.

"My grief was such that I could not help sharing it with Alva, and revealed to the girl her origin as well as her mother's death. Alva was in profound despair, and as I perceived that her health was suffering thereby, I resolutely left London, and we visited in succession Cairo, the Canary Islands, Palermo and Algeria.

"Alva had quite recovered her health and the splendour of her youthful beauty, and, as we both needed rest and a fixed abode, at her wish we went on to Paris, where we have now been residing for twenty months.

"I am doing my best to make the narrative short, but I am bound to explain everything, since I must finally appeal to your friendship, which, although not of very long standing, is, nevertheless, one in which I have the most complete confidence.

"I have now reached the epoch of our sojourn in Paris. I knew we had been hunted for, but as we often changed our name and residence, and as we were quite independent, we never made any debts, and, in a word, did nothing that could attract special attention, it was really almost impossible to discover us. Moreover, ever since the death of the Princess, I had been aware that sooner or later there would be attacks against me, for I knew the harshness and avarice of those who had survived my

unhappy friend. For some time past I had been worried by the complexity of the requirements necessary for receiving my income, all the securities being in England. I mentioned these annoyances to one of the employees of the bank who was acting as my agent, and who, I may say in parenthesis, is at the present time behaving himself abominably toward me.

" 'Madame,' replied this employee, 'nothing could be easier to remedy. We receive every day quantities of securities from London under policies of insurance. You have only to direct your London banker to give to one of our London agents, in exchange for our receipt, the papers deposited with him, and we will receive them, merely charging you for the insurance policy and the carriage. We will place at your disposal one of our safes, with a receipt to that effect.'

"Unfortunately I accepted this proposition, and this is what has been done. Hugot on the first of every month used to go with my receipt to the bank, where the cashier, who was thoroughly trustworthy, regularly detached the coupons from my securities in honouring my monthly receipt.

"A few months ago, one of the detectives sent to discover our whereabouts found out our address. He had met Hugot, whom he recognised, in the street, and followed him to our hotel, where, quite quietly, he took rooms in order to watch us. He kept his eye especially on Hugot, and finally discovered the bank where our money was deposited. And thus it came to pass when, about three months ago, Hugot went to the bank with my receipt, the cashier informed him that he could not honour it, regular opposition having been noti-

fied on behalf of a foreign Court by one of the great Embassies.

"Hugot returned in utter consternation. You can imagine the effect of this news upon me. I rushed off to the bank. I asked if I could not be given a sum quite outside and apart from my revenue, but this was refused. Such was the nature of the opposition that it had aroused suspicions against me at the bank. I returned home in despair. The manager of the hotel, to whom, without giving any details, I communicated the fact of my momentary embarrassment, behaved admirably, and requested me to make no change in my manner of living.

"I immediately wrote to Alven, with whom I can correspond without any danger, but he was away from home, and I had to wait for a reply until his return.

"When he got back he sent me a legal adviser whom I could trust. We went together to consult one of the most eminent members of the French bar. He asked me to show him the titles guaranteeing my right to the property. I possessed nothing but the London banker's receipt and that of the Paris banker. He declared that these two receipts appeared to him insufficient to secure the cancelling of the opposition, but that in any case I could bring legal action. The result, however, in the dearth of further documents, appeared to him doubtful. I refused to bring an action, dreading sensation and scandal, newspaper articles and reporters, and the whole horror of a situation which was sure to end disastrously.

"The lawyer then went back to Alven, who began to consider what should be done. Such is my present situation, and it is your own communication to me which has led me to reveal to you these facts. I have long wanted

to mention them to you, but now that you have heard my story you can understand why I have hesitated, fearing to place myself in a painful light if I had done so earlier. If I do so now, it is because you yourself have afforded me the occasion by taking, so to speak, the first step. And now, if you will come to see me to-morrow, and if you are disposed to champion my cause, as I think you are, I will tell you the service which I have to ask of you."

When I returned on the morrow she had, indeed, reflected.

"I know," she said, "that Monsieur Waddington, the Prime Minister, is a great friend of yours, and it is said you have rendered him many services for which he is grateful. We must learn from him how this opposition has been obtained, for our enemies, you understand, have fewer rights to put forward than I, as, after all, I am in possession of my fortune, and the opposition in question is, in spite of, or because of, its validity, an absolutely arbitrary act. I want you to go to see Monsieur Waddington, to explain the situation to him, to ask him to find out how and on what grounds the opposition has been taken, and then to use his authority to protect me against the injustice of which I am the victim."

What Marsa had said was perfectly true. M. Waddington cherished a real sentiment of gratitude toward me. On the 12th of November, 1877, at the fall of the Cabinet of the 16th of May, M. Dufaure was about to form his ministry, in which M. Waddington was to take the portfolio of education and the Count de Saint Vallier that of Foreign Affairs.

At the request of some friends I went to see M. Dufaure,

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L'Angleterre, riche, industrielle, tout adonnée aux solutions des problèmes intérieurs, garde une attitude qui prévient la guerre, et cela tremblera point, et c'est ainsi que, étant un regard rassuré sur l'Europe à l'heure présente, on peut dire au monde qui le rend aux grandes assises de l'industrie, des lettres et des arts, dont Chicago va être la Capitale : Allez en repos. La guerre est loin. Cueillez en paix le fruit de nos pacifiques victoires.

Blowitz

SPECIMEN OF THE HANDWRITING OF M. DE BLOWITZ, WRITTEN A FEW DAYS BEFORE THE OPENING OF THE CHICAGO EXHIBITION

who always showed me the greatest good-will, and proved to him that he ought to give the portfolio of education to M. Bardoux, his former associate at the Ministry of Justice, that M. de Saint Vallier, for whom Prince Bismarck professed particular sympathy, ought to be sent to Berlin, and that for peremptory reasons he ought to give the ministry of foreign affairs to M. Waddington. To this M. Dufaure agreed, and on the spot he confided to me the mission of seeing M. Waddington and, in his name, of offering him the ministry of foreign affairs, instead of that of education. I went immediately, in spite of the late hour, to the Rue Dumont d'Urville, to M. Waddington's house, to fulfil the mission entrusted to me.

M. Waddington, after some hesitation, and notwithstanding Madame Waddington's energetic opposition, accepted the offer and became Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Dufaure Cabinet. It was thus that he took part, as first Plenipotentiary, in the Berlin Congress, where, throughout the sessions, from the beginning to the end, I was fortunate enough to render him daily services, and where I constantly defended him by word and pen against the attacks of the French newspapers.

After the Congress I explained and upheld his acts to his chief, M. Dufaure, the Prime Minister, and finally, in a long talk with M. Gambetta, a summary of which, in the form of an interview, appeared in the *Times*, and was, by M. Gambetta's orders, reproduced in the *République Française*, I brought about between the two a *rapprochement*, as a consequence of which M. Gambetta abandoned his hostility toward M. Waddington.

The latter, moreover, never ceased to show his affection

for me, and when Marsa proposed to me to see him I readily consented, sure in advance that I should succeed, and delighted at the thought of making her happy.

As I was crossing the courtyard of the hotel, I perceived the manager looking at me from his office door. I went up to him and told him that what he had said the night before was true, but that the embarrassment of the Duchess was temporary, and that I begged him to make no change in his manner toward her, and even to speak to the shopkeepers, in order to induce them to continue to extend their confidence to the Duchess, for, I added, "I guarantee that neither you nor any one will lose a penny." The manager was delighted and promised to do what I asked. I felt no anxiety in standing surety for Marsa after what she had said, and, convinced as I was that I should succeed almost immediately in arranging matters, this detail seemed quite natural.

I went off to the Quai d'Orsay to see M. Waddington. He received me with his customary warmth. I asked him if he had time to listen to me. He rang for the usher, gave orders that he should not be disturbed until he called, and, opening the door that led into the bureau of his *Chef de Cabinet*, gave similar orders there. He listened to me attentively, insisting that I should omit no detail, now and then showing that my story touched him. When I had finished, he said:

"I thank you for telling me this, although I am really troubled about it; but my knowledge of the affair was very slight. I had heard of it, but had attached little importance to the matter. I am going to examine it carefully and without delay. If you will come back at

2.30 to-morrow I hope to be able to give you every satisfaction."

I rushed off to Marsa to report the good news. She was delighted and said to me:

"I have only just received a letter from Alven, of which I will speak to you to-morrow when all is over, although I may tell you that he says, even if I do not succeed in averting the perfidious attack of which I am the object, I must not despair."

"I hope," I replied, "that the day after to-morrow I shall bring you a definite solution, and that you will have no need of appealing to Doctor Alven."

Alas! I did not bring her on that date a definite solution. I found M. Waddington nervous and anxious, almost irritated. He had immediately investigated the matter.

"I have made the necessary inquiry," he said. "Although I regret it, I am bound to tell you frankly that I cannot possibly agree to do what you ask of me. We are face to face with the direct intervention of a powerful Ambassador, acting under the orders of his Government. The opposition to the payment is perfectly regular, and we are on the point of receiving proofs of its validity and of the rights of seizure which are demanded. I beg you to excuse me for what I am going to say, but your two *protegées* are described as adventuresses and accused of embezzlement, while the story of the daughter of a royal Princess is treated as a ridiculous fable. She is said to be merely the illegitimate child of the woman called the Duchess, and the latter is accused of having taken advantage of the insanity of the Princess, whose maid of honour she was, to steal from her the estate settled on

her. In order to satisfy you, I should have first to talk the matter over with the President of the Republic, and then bring it before the Cabinet Council. But I am sure I should have M. Grévy against me as well as the Cabinet —that is to say, I should have to resign, which would in no way advance matters, for, after all, I may perhaps be able to be of service to you."

I got up hastily. M. Waddington reproached me for my brusk movement, and, as I saw that he deeply regretted the whole affair, the idea of Doctor Alven's letter came to me, and, quite by chance, and in order to gain time, I said to M. Waddington that I had promised to stand surety for Marsa, that I was personally much embarrassed, and, since he was to be shown the proofs of the legality of the opposition, I begged him to grant me a little time. "Since the proof is to be given you," I said, "you may at all events, in some way or other, find a way of postponing the seizure for several months, particularly as I shall be greatly inconvenienced now that I am surety for these ladies."

M. Waddington was really troubled. "I think," he said, "that you have the truth on your side. Your story must be true, for you were the first to show me how to verify it. But I can do nothing against the state of things which would appear like assuming an insulting attitude against the honoured representative of a great power. Yet, in order to prove to you my complete good faith, I promise that the authorisation for the seizure shall not be granted before August 15th. That, I fear, is all I can do for you."

Evidently, if Marsa did not faint on my telling her this, it was because she still had faith in Alven, and because she

saw me, too, in such despair that she had recourse to all her energy. She said to me:

"Alven is at present at Samaden in the Engadine, in charge of a distinguished patient, whom he cannot leave for a single day. He keeps me apprised of what is going on. They are trying to collect the documents to prove that the Princess was insane before she sold her lands and before giving me the securities. Alven has interfered heroically in this infamous plot. Other doctors have come to his rescue. He does not know whether he will succeed in thwarting this scheme, but in any case it will take some time for things to come to a crisis. Alven begs me to go to him with Alva, whom he longs to see. He does not know, my poor dear friend, that I am myself a prisoner, and that in spite of your intervention with my creditors, my departure would look like flight, that I should receive a legal summons, and that we should be ruined. Yet Alven declares that he must know absolutely all the details of what has occurred, and this can be only *viva voce*. Moreover, I must be prompt, for he is about to leave Samaden with his patient, probably for Cairo."

"And what are you going to do?" I asked.

She blushed, then grew pale. After a few moments of hesitation, she finally said:

"I am going to appeal to the greatest devotion, the greatest abnegation, the greatest sentiment of honour, of which a man can give proof to two women whom he does not know. Will you accompany Alva with one of my maids to Samaden? I know that in confiding her to your honour I am not wanting in my duty toward her. But I do not wish it to be known that Alven has met her—

first, because they would take vengeance on him, and secondly, because, if proved, this meeting would destroy the intervention against the declaration of madness, and everything would be lost."

"But when shall we start?" I asked.

She grasped my hand and kissed it, covering it with tears.

"Your kindness consoles me for all my woes. You will leave on the fourteenth; Hugot, who will precede you, will await you at Lucerne, where you will arrive on the morning of the fifteenth. Go to the Hotel National, where he will be introduced to you by the hotel people and offer his services as courier. He knows quite well what to do and is well acquainted with the country. He will conduct you to Samaden and even farther, as a tourist travelling by post-chaise. At Samaden you will go to the hotel where Alven is stopping. Alva, toward 11 P. M., will feel unwell, and Hugot, in seeking a doctor, will naturally appeal to Alven, who will have returned half an hour earlier. Alva will remain ill two days, during which time she will be taken care of by her maid; and you three—Alva, you and Alven—will thus have ample time to talk without arousing suspicion, and to do what Alven tells you or directs me to do."

She interrupted her explanations and paused some length of time. Then resolutely, as if summoning all her courage, she said:

"Alas! this is not all; but at present I dare not part with the little money that remains, and——"

I interrupted her:

"Do not let us lose precious moments in futile words. I shall be delighted to take this trip, and I am sure that

Alva's presence will make it more charming. I will advance the money. If you recover your property, you will give me back Alva's half of the expenses. If not, I shall endeavour to bear the loss."

On the morning of July 15th we arrived at Lucerne, at the Hotel National. We waited for Hugot. Toward noon the manager of the hotel, then the famous M. Ritz, came to see me and informed me that a courier, who had just left a family whom he had accompanied to Lucerne, offered me his services. It was Hugot.

I wanted to start immediately, but Alva was fatigued and wanted to rest until the morrow. Moreover—and this was a very feminine trait—in spite of all I could say, and although we were thus losing a day, she refused to continue our journey without having made the ascent of the Rigi. I had to yield. Hugot was to leave on the morrow for Fluellen at the end of the Lake of Four Cantons, where he transported our baggage, and we and the maid were to stop at Vitznau, lunch on the Rigi, take the afternoon boat, and meet Hugo at Fluellen.

We found him there with the hotel carriage, and he told us he had engaged a four-horse team, such as is habitually employed for this route, to drive by the St. Gothard, by Andermatten and Chiaso to Lugano, where we should cross the lake to continue, on the opposite shore, our journey to Samaden. We started on the following morning, and an incident on the route depressed us by the lugubrious presentiments that it inspired, but which, happily, were not realised.

Two years before I had gone from the Rigi, where I was staying, to Goeschenen, to visit the works in the St. Gothard tunnel. I had been received most

hospitably there by M. Fabre, the contractor of the tunnel, and he had shown me the work that had already been accomplished. When, two years later, I passed with Alva by Goeschenen, in front of the very hotel where I had been received, I was asked to stop my carriage, and I saw, issuing from the tunnel, an immense procession of men in dark clothes following a coffin, which passed before us. They were workmen of the tunnel accompanying to his last resting-place the body of M. Fabre. I was much impressed by the somber coincidence, and arrived with a heavy heart at Andermatten, whence without further incident we proceeded to Samaden.

There we remained two days. Alven was informed of all the necessary details. He was delighted to see Alva, and he parted from her in despair. Hugot's conduct had been admirable. Not the slightest suspicion had arisen in regard to us. When I went away, Alven gave me a large and heavy letter in a double envelope, saying:

"Take great care of it; it is perhaps salvation itself. I have rendered to the omnipotent person to whom it is addressed the greatest service a man can render to another man. I saved from certain death a human being he adored. He has always said that there was nothing he would refuse me. It is the first time I have ever appealed to him, and if, on returning to Paris, the situation has not yet improved, tear open the first envelope and carry the letter, without even showing it to Marsa, to the address on the second envelope."

Alva returned to her hotel, accompanied by Hugot and her maid, and on the morrow, Marsa having informed me that there had been no change, I tore open the first

envelope and saw that the second was addressed, with the word "Confidential," to "Prince Orloff, Ambassador of H. M. the Emperor of all the Russias, Paris."

When on the address of the second envelope I saw Prince Orloff's name I was delighted, for I knew the intervention would be a powerful one, and that my relations with the Prince would permit me to make the most of it. I hastened to see him. Without offering any explanations, I handed to him Alven's voluminous missive. When he had opened it and looked at the signature, he said to me with a voice full of emotion:

"Ah! you come from a man who is as dear to me as any one in this world outside of my family; but I see that the letter is very long. I should like to read it carefully, whatever may be its contents, and we will talk about it to-morrow if you will come back then."

I returned on the following day and found him in a somewhat excited state.

"I will do all that is possible for a man to do," said he, "all that is not contrary to my absolute duty, all, and I am ready to talk with you."

The conversation was a long one, and more than once he exclaimed:

"What! this girl whom you call Alva is the daughter of that adorable, that ever memorable Princess who was the great star of my youth, and whose mystery I have never been able to fathom! I will do everything, but what can I do?"

"You must go to see M. Waddington," I replied, "to destroy the effect of the abominable calumnies that have been told him, to show to him the infamy of the whole spoliation in which they want to make him their accom-

plice, and, if he refuses to listen to you, declare to him that you will ask for your passports."

"Yes," said he, "I will do all except the last part, for, if I declare that in case of refusal I shall ask for my passports, it would be a threat to which he could not yield without compromising the dignity of his country. I shall confine myself, therefore, to the first part of the programme, and we shall see what happens."

This he did, and, as a consequence, M. Waddington told him that he would submit the case to a still closer examination and inform him as to the result.

We waited two days, but nothing happened. I returned to see Prince Orloff.

"I think I know," said I, "what is taking place. They find themselves between the pressing intervention of two powerful Ambassadors. They are going to try to drag the affair along, and they will inform the Ambassador, our opponent, to hasten to present, without further delay, the promised proof. But we, on our side, have no time to lose. Every day is precious, and we ought to push the matter forward or all is lost."

"What, then, do you advise?" asked the Prince.

"I will tell you," I said. "Your Excellency, I am well aware, cannot directly threaten to hand in your passports, but I can go to see M. Waddington and tell him if he refuses to accomplish the act of justice which he demands, you are bound to consider it as a personal offense and will then feel it your duty to demand your passports."

"But he will think you are merely talking," was the reply, "and will pay no heed to it."

"No," said I, "if you will do what I ask, I will say to him if he expresses any doubt, that, to prove to him the

accuracy of my words, you will go to see him at 4:45—that is to say, a quarter of an hour before what is termed the 'signature time,' when visitors are not allowed to remain any longer—and that you will merely say to him, in giving him your hand, without another word, 'I come to say that I have authorised M. de Blowitz to speak to you as he has done, and I hope that on my next visit I shall have to thank you.' Then you will give him a good hand-shake and take your leave."

"So be it," he answered; "only let me know if he expects me."

When I had explained to M. Waddington the motive of my visit he exclaimed excitedly and almost angrily: "But it is a *raison d'état* that you are creating of this. You are placing two great Ambassadors in opposition to each other. Yet we cannot forget Prince Orloff's attitude in 1875, when the German military party threatened us with a second invasion. I await Prince Orloff's visit, and if he comes, I promise you that I will carry the whole business before the President of the Republic and call his special attention to it."

Prince Orloff's visit took place, and three days later M. Waddington sent for me.

"The President, the Minister of Justice and I have had two conversations during the last three days, and here is our decision. We cannot offend the Embassy that is your opponent, and I have declared that the situation cannot go on as it is. We shall wait six days longer, and if within that period the incontestable justification has not reached us, the Minister of Justice will order the raising of the opposition. Moreover, the present situation is unprecedented. Neither the lady who possesses the fortune

nor those who formulate the opposition can justify, nor probably ever will be able to prove a right to this property; and if this should go on we should be obliged to hand over these securities to the *Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations*, and this would probably be the end of them. We should thus bequeath to the State endless difficulties for the future, which it is our duty to try to avoid. Your *protégée*, however, has on her side the right of possession, and it is out of respect for this right that we are acting. Tell her to hold herself in readiness, for I do not think from the replies I have received that this justification can arrive in time. On the 31st, at noon, if the period elapses without the arrival of the proofs, come to see me, and I will tell you what has occurred."

At the appointed hour I was with M. Waddington. He informed me that orders had just been given and that at 3:30 the opposition would be raised, but that, as the proof could, notwithstanding, arrive at any moment, he urged us to lose no time.

Marsa and Alva were wild with joy. It was not only their fortune, but their honour, their liberty and their life that were at stake. Two enormous boxes had been prepared in advance to contain the papers. At 3:30 Marsa, Alva and Hugot went to the bank, whither I had refused to accompany them, and there, without any obstacle being thrown in their way, the cashier delivered the papers. The boxes in which they were placed were nailed down immediately. As there had been no time to detach the coupons, the bank itself bought and paid for, cash down, certain securities amounting to 200,000 francs, which Marsa took; and that very evening Hugot, accompanied by two policemen in plain clothes,

embarked for London, where he deposited the money in the former repository.

As M. Waddington had urged me to induce these ladies to leave Paris as soon as possible, Marsa spent the next three days in settling to the last centime all her Paris bills, and on the 5th of the month following, at 11 A. M., after having packed all their belongings, they left for England.

I went with them as far as Calais, and only left the boat and returned to the quay when the whistle blew, announcing the departure of the steamer for England.

CHAPTER X

The Revenge of Venus

It all happened at the beginning of the winter of 1881. Mr. Beckman, the Paris correspondent of the Berlin *National Zeitung*, who was then living in the Rue de Chateaudun, invited me to dinner at his house. An amiable, active, boisterous, but kindly person, Mr. Beckman, occupied at the time, and, in fact, maintained until the end of his life, a position in Paris that was not altogether an easy one. Before the war of 1870 he had enjoyed most familiar and sympathetic relations with Frenchmen. He wrote in *Le Temps*, one of the papers most dreaded by the Empire. The numerous contributors to that journal, all of whom were advancing with firm and sonorous step along the path of Liberalism, were all friends of Beckman. In its editorial rooms he had no enemy. All the writers of *Le Temps*, who were waging unceasingly a courteous but energetic battle against the Empire, used to listen deferentially to him and, verily, to open their hearts to him.

Suddenly war broke out and Beckman left Paris.

One can easily understand that it was not possible for him to remain in Paris, but it was thought that he would withdraw into some neutral country. It appears that he did not do this, and when, after peace was concluded, he returned to France and resumed his duties as correspondent, at the same time accepting the position of

reader of French newspapers at the German Embassy, French houses closed their doors to him, and he never succeeded in getting them open again. As, however, there was no necessity for me to take part in this quarrel, and as Beckman was a kindly and serviceable colleague, a mutual friend arranged for us to meet, and a short time afterward Beckman invited me to dinner, calling upon me himself in order to insist on my presence.

On the day appointed I arrived at his house. The drawing-room filled rapidly with guests, almost all of whom were conspicuous members of the foreign colonies in Paris. It was past the time fixed for dinner, and Beckman had chosen for the ladies their various partners. I was rather surprised to find that I had evidently been forgotten, when my host came up to me and said:

"We are waiting for a lady who is by no means the least charming of my guests, Princess Kralta, and you are to take her in to dinner."

A few moments later the door opened; there was a flutter of surprise, and I beheld a lady whose exquisite elegance, complete ease and, in a word, beauty attracted general attention. She smiled in the most charming way, and in a melodious voice apologised for her late arrival. Beckman led me up to her and introduced me as her partner. Soon afterward the dining-room doors were thrown open and we all went in to dinner.

When the noise occasioned by the seating of a score of guests had somewhat subsided, the boisterous voice of our amphitryon rang out joyously:

"Ladies and gentlemen, let every one who is not content with his or her neighbour put up the hand."

Gravely the lady to the right of Beckman raised hers, and the burst of laughter that ensued was the prelude to an extremely gay and lively dinner.

The Princess Kralta turned quickly to me. Her large blue eyes, which lighted up one of the most fascinating faces I have ever seen, were levelled at me coquettishly. She gave a little toss to the silky curls of her light chestnut hair as she said with a smile which revealed the brilliancy of her small teeth:

"I don't know whether you are inclined to put your hand up, but I shall certainly do nothing of the sort, for I am charmed with my neighbour, and this confession will not make you too vain when I have told you why. I will not conceal from you that I am just back from Berlin and that the Prince" [Prince Bismarck] "on bidding me good-by said to me: 'If you go to Paris look up M. de Blowitz. There has been a violent discussion in the papers between him and me. I allowed the press to attack him violently. It was on the subject of a speech about Gortchakoff, which he attributed to me during the Berlin Congress. I fancy he somewhat embellished this speech, but it is quite true that I did deliver it substantially as he gave it; this is why I accused him indirectly of mixing up truth and fiction. However, I bear him no grudge. He exercises his profession as well as he can, and that is far above the ordinary; so that, if you have an opportunity, try to meet him. He knows Paris well, and he is an excellent guide.'"

The Princess added: "I feel I need not hide this circumstance from you and it will allow us to dispense with long preliminaries. As a proof of the unceremonious way in which I make friends I will tell you this: although

it is now some time since the Congress met, the curiosity of the Prince is still very keen as to how you obtained possession, in advance, of the treaty of Berlin. He cannot understand it. He considers it natural that you should have tried to get it, and he assured me that the fact rather amused him than otherwise. He nevertheless feels convinced that in one way or another he will eventually get at the truth. His chief grievance is that you, by a combination that was very simple, should have prevented him from communicating the treaty first to the German press. He wished to do this as a gracious return for the patriotic hospitality with which that press received the members of the Congress in the capital of the new German Empire. And I—I tell you frankly, because I am eager to win your confidence and, perhaps later, your friendship—I told him that I would try to obtain the secret from you, since he appears to be so bent on knowing it. I added that it could not be one of those secrets which resist forever the firm will of a woman ready to prove herself worthy of the confidence she solicits."

I laughed and said that it really was a charming way of making an acquaintance, when so fascinating a woman let me know plainly at what price her friendship could be won. And it can easily be imagined how, after these preliminaries, the dinner was continued—a dinner the memory of which remains still vivid in my mind, after twenty years have flown.

I have not the slightest recollection as to who the other guests were, nor as to the conversation that went on. But what I do recall vividly is the harmonious voice of my neighbour and her anecdotes about her life at Berlin,

which had been one long *fête*. She had access there to the most select circles. As I was obliged to leave immediately after dinner in order to work, I avoided the smoking-room, and bade good-by to my radiant neighbour, who said to me, "I sincerely hope that you will come to see me, not so much on my day, but any time you like."

After such a beginning, the reader will understand that our acquaintance was not to end there.

Five or six days later I called on the Princess at her very attractive home not far from the Arc de Triomphe. She received me with a certain grace that had a touch of familiarity, showing that she had pleasant recollections of her visitor. Some time afterward, as I had not yet met her husband, she wrote to invite me to dinner, adding that she should be charmed at this opportunity of bringing us together.

When I entered her drawing-room on the evening of this dinner I was struck by the somewhat heterogeneous aspect of the company. Not only were there various nationalities represented, but there was, as well, a curious mingling of really great names of vanished French régimes and of eminent personalities of the existing one. With these there was a discreet infusion of Germans, for the dinner was a sort of birthday banquet, although I did not know it at the time, and the initiated had filled the house with a profusion of fragrant flowers, the warm colours of which, under the brilliant light that played over the elegant toilets and glistened from the precious stones, formed for the hostess a sumptuous and radiant frame.

The Princess introduced me to her husband in the most correct way, but with a studied negligence, as if

the introduction as merely an incident of secondary importance.

After dinner she asked me which was my wife's day, and begged me to say that she intended to call. During the entire evening she was much absorbed by her duties as hostess, but she said to me as I took my leave:

"I know that you never stay late, but I hope to see you one of these days to resume our conversation, for I warn you that I still cling to my idea of wresting your secret from you, and I desire this all the more as it is in order to give pleasure to a certain person you know."

When I called upon her after this dinner we conversed in a lighter vein, and I left the Princess without her being able to touch on what she called "the great problem of her coquetry."

She came to see my wife, and I returned her politeness by inviting her and her husband to a dinner party at my house. I inaugurated on this occasion a fashion which pleased her and which shortly afterward was widely imitated in Parisian society. I had installed two orchestras, which played very softly alternately, in two small rooms at either end of the table, so that the conversation continued with a double musical accompaniment which filled the room without interfering with the conversation. The Princess, charmed with this idea, lost no time in adopting it. Before long she invited us to dinner, but I went alone, as my wife, who was often ill, was obliged to decline at the last moment. I was not surprised on sitting down to hear stringed instruments filling the air with harmony, while in the gallery at some little distance a Spanish orchestra played in swift suc-

cession the characteristic dances and the Arab songs which the Gitanas sing in the streets of Granada.

This dinner had a character of its own and was unlike any given in other Parisian houses. There were not many ladies present—in fact, only a few of the most intimate friends of the hostess; but, on account of my position, the men interested me greatly. The entire German Embassy was there, with its great and illustrious chief, Prince Hohenlohe, at the head. The Berlin Congress had considerably tempered the relations between France and Germany. Prince Bismarck had been most attentive and deferential to the representatives of France. He insisted at the Congress on settling the question of the Rumanian Jews and also that of Greece, which M. Waddington had so much at heart. He never lost an opportunity of supporting the views of the French Plenipotentiary, whom he consulted openly; he showed particular attention to Count de St. Vallier, and he managed that the writing of the protocols should be entrusted to the exceptionally capable pen of M. Desprès, a chief secretary at the French Foreign Office, and third French Plenipotentiary at the Berlin Congress. Prince Hohenlohe himself was looked upon as an ambassador of peace and conciliation. All his endeavours and the efforts of those under him were directed to smoothing the relations between France and its former conqueror, and his capable associates, among whom was the young secretary, Count Von Bülow, now Imperial Chancellor, seconded him in the most intelligent manner.

On finding myself in the Princess Kralta's drawing-room in the midst of this company, I apprehended that

it was due to the intelligence and good-will of Prince Bismarck that such elements as these had been brought together in a Paris *salon;* and I must own that I experienced a certain amount of apprehension, for I felt that all here were of one mind, and I gathered that the hostess was acting under the individual and collective influence of these incomparable strategists, with whom she delighted in surrounding herself.

. . . . . .

It was toward the beginning of the summer season of 1881. The Princess was preparing for her round of watering-places. My own vacation was approaching, and I resolved after this particular evening to keep away for a time from this woman whose actions I dreaded. I saw quite well that she had not given up her idea of discovering the secret she was bent on obtaining from me. I felt that the whole official world assembled in that room were taking an amused delight in seconding her efforts, and I, on my side, was determined not to succumb in the strange battle in which we were engaged. After that evening I met the Princess only once again before my departure, and during the autumn season I heard that she was ill and could not see any one.

The season of 1882 was for me an extraordinarily absorbing one. Now and then in some French or foreign *salon* I met the Princess, who had recovered from her illness. Her chestnut hair had turned golden, and the change had so transformed her that she seemed to me like a woman with a fresh and new charm.

The chances of renewing our acquaintance became more and more remote, and I had almost forgotten her when, toward the middle of 1883, I received a pressing

invitation to luncheon at her new mansion in the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne.

To my great surprise, and contrary to her custom, she had no other guest but her mother, an Oriental flower now somewhat faded, whose languishing eyes gave the keynote to her daughter's beauty. During luncheon the Princess, who had acquired additional grace and whose experience of the world, of men and of things seemed to have increased since I had last seen her, displayed such a wealth of memory, such keen observation and such resources in the way of anecdotal chatter that I was perfectly charmed, and the time passed only too quickly.

"I shall write you to-morrow," she said when I left, "to ask you to come again, when I will tell you something of my most recent history. I am sure it will hold its own among any of the contemporary mysteries which you may know."

Her mother at these words looked up hastily. "But, Christine," she said, "you promised me to say nothing about that."

"In the first place," retorted the Princess, somewhat vivaciously, "when I told you about it you made no such objection; and, secondly, I mean to tell it to him just to prove what an exception I make in his case."

The next morning I received a single line: "Come to see me day after to-morrow at four o'clock."

. . . . . .

On the day and at the hour indicated I went to the house in the Avenue du Bois. The butler, who was waiting in the antechamber, had, I believe, received his orders. He ushered me into the second drawing-room, where the

Princess was wont to receive her unofficial visitors. Although it was still long before nightfall, the shutters of both drawing-rooms were closed. The side-brackets in the large *salon* were lighted and shed only a vague radiance across the lofty and spacious room. The smaller *salon* was more brilliantly illuminated by an immense candelabrum standing on an elegant table in front of a sofa, the back of which was placed against a mirror that reached to the ceiling. The butler asked me to take a seat, and added that the Princess would be with me immediately. In the deep silence that reigned I heard that peculiar sound which is made by the soft step of a woman advancing over a heavy carpet, amidst the vague rustle of her silken robes. It was the Princess, and I saw her crossing the bright passage lighted by the brackets of the outer *salon*, then partially disappear in the semi-obscurity of the large room, and emerge again like a sudden vision at the entrance of the smaller *salon*. I was impressed by the imperiousness of all her movements and of her person, and I had almost forgotten her promise to tell me her adventures, when she invited me to take a seat near her on the sofa, between the high candlesticks and the immense mirror in which the light was reflected.

"And now," she said, "let me tell you the story of which I spoke to you three days ago. It will prove to you that I regard you henceforth as a friend to whom one may confide one's most intimate thoughts without any risk. I have, I think, just rendered an immense service to the peace of the world, and have not feared to expose myself to great danger in order to show the man who asked this service of me how devoted I was to him.

Some weeks ago I chanced to be at a watering-place where the great German Emperor was staying. One morning he sent for me. When I arrived he rose hastily, came toward me and, stooping until his face was almost on a level with mine, he said: 'I have a great service to ask of you, for myself, for my country and for Europe. For some time the letters, telegrams and reports of the Prince have troubled me. They betray the anxiety and irritation of a man in a very nervous state. He complains of everybody. He has grudges against Belgium, Switzerland, Holland, France, England and Russia. He speaks bitterly of all these countries and appears to suspect them of hostility toward us. He accuses them of creating difficulties, and, with the exception of Austria-Hungary and Italy, fancies that the rest of Europe is ready to pick a quarrell with us. I am really afraid that one of these fine days he may draw down upon us from some of these countries a reply which might place us in the alternative of imposing our will on them or of submitting to theirs. In my opinion, he is suffering from one of those attacks of pathologic boredom to which he is subject, and which, when they occur, really make him alarming. He must have some kind of diversion as soon as possible. He is alone on his great estate, spending his time in thinking over things, and he has with him a certain number of subalterns who always agree with him and who try to flatter him by approving all he says and by encouraging his exaggerations. I asked you to come here, not to order you, but to beg you earnestly to do something which will restore to me the repose I need and which the Prince's attitude demands.'

"'Sire,' I replied 'I am ready to do whatever Your Majesty asks, and that unhesitatingly.'

"'I thank you,' he said, 'and I shall always be deeply grateful to you. . . . Return home, then, without saying you have seen me. Within half an hour I shall send for your husband and bid him go to Berlin with a message from me and wait there for a reply. He will start this afternoon by the first train. Directly afterward you will prepare as small a quantity of luggage as possible for spending a week away from home. You will have that luggage taken to the station, where a man who will have received orders will arrange for its ultimate delivery without being registered. This same person will meet you at a neighbouring station, to which you and your maid will be driven, and he will install you in a reserved compartment. You will go to the Prince, and on the eve of your return you will send off a telegram. You will then come back here, and in the evening your husband will return from his mission. Go, and accept my thanks.'

"Everything occurred exactly as arranged by the Emperor. The Prince, whom I had informed of my arrival a few hours beforehand, received me rather impolitely. His first words were:

"'Was it the Emperor who sent you?'

"'No,' I replied; 'I have come to see how a man like you, whose will dominates that of Europe, will receive a giddy little person who ventures to invade the lion's solitude.'

"He burst out laughing, gave orders for me to be shown to my apartments, and when my five trunks arrived said to me gaily, 'I hope from your baggage that it is not merely a short visit you are going to pay me.'

"'Oh!' I replied, 'with all the frills and furbelows I require, five trunks are not enough for a long visit.' Thereupon, gay as a child, he insisted upon being present at the unpacking, and was immensely amused to see the dresses and things I had hastily flung into the trunks taken out and put in their places.

"When I left, he conducted me to my landau and said, 'I have been delighted to forget the affairs of the world for a time, and I shall postpone dealing with those affairs as long as possible.'

"I went back to my watering-place. My husband returned on the same evening. Our absence had aroused very little curiosity, and on the morrow before going away I paid the Emperor a farewell visit.

"The great monarch received me with extreme joy. He saw that everything had calmed down; that peace seemed established, and that in all probability the year 1883 would pass off without incident. He was amused at the thought of the stratagem he had employed and the success that had attended it."

During this narrative I felt deeply moved. I sat there in the presence of a beautiful and intelligent woman who had just accomplished a most extraordinary mission, considering the immense power of those whose intermediary she had been. And to think that this great Emperor had concocted his scheme merely to calm the mind of a Chancellor to whom he dared not openly dictate his will, but whom a few years later a single gesture of his grandson was to reduce to utter impotence.

While the Princess was speaking I said to myself: "I see what is about to take place. I have received proof of her devoted affection. She is only just back, as it were,

from her visit to the Prince, to whom she has promised that she will solve a mystery which has irritated him long enough. She has stopped at nothing in order to have the right to ask about my secret, and I, for my part, can scarcely refuse her, since she has confided to me her secret, the divulgence of which might be fatal to her. True, she made me swear not to mention it during the Emperor's lifetime, and not before the Prince retired from office. But even in this, too, she showed great confidence, for she believes in my promise, so that, as in reality there is no great danger in letting the Prince know how I got hold of the document, and as, probably, he will be quite content if only his curiosity be satisfied, there is no serious reason for keeping my secret." I accordingly awaited her request quite prepared to grant it.

She turned to me and said: "Now I know you well enough to be convinced that you will now accede to my request, which you have hitherto always refused to do. I need not employ stratagem, and it would be futile in the case of a man like you. Quite simply and without any circumlocution, I now beg you to prove to me that I can count on you as an absolute friend. Tell me how it occurred, and how you were able to accomplish an act until then unique—the publication of a treaty of a Congress at the very moment of its signature."

To her great surprise I was silent!

For some moments, since the close of her narrative, one of the candles of the candelabrum on the table in front of the sofa had begun to flicker. I was astonished at this, as the doors and windows were all closed. On looking around I was unable to guess from what quarter the current of air came which caused the flame to flicker.

I moved and placed myself just in front of the candelabrum, and I then felt, coming from the direction of the mirror, an unmistakable draught which fanned my cheek.

I perceived at once that I was the victim of treachery, which is what I hate above all else in the world. I closely scrutinised the mirror and saw that a slight gap, which had been made only during the last few instants, separated the two halves of the glass, and I understood that behind it there was a witness ready to take down what I might say. Rising suddenly, and in a voice which I vainly strove to render calm, I said, pointing first at the flickering flame and then at the cloven mirror, just when the Princess was putting out her hand to remove the candlestick:

"Madame, it is needless. You see that I have understood."

She saw that distinctly and, turning away her head, she touched an electric button. The door opened, a servant appeared, and, without looking at me, she stretched out her hand and indicated the way to the door.

. . . . . .

This story, which is already rather long, had an epilogue and a conclusion which are not tragic, but which have a certain irony. I met the Princess again in society. Her mother and sister, on the morrow of this interview, intervened. They explained that she had been obliged to act as she did because she had attached so much importance to her success that it was absolutely indispensable to have an authoritative witness in order to prove that it was from me she obtained the information as to the treaty.

When I met the Princess afterward we were no longer

on such friendly terms as before, but our intercourse was quite pleasant after the temporary rupture.

Two years later I could not help noticing that her manner had changed as well as her language and surroundings. She went in for more luxury, even. It seemed to me disproportionate with her means. But as I was then a comparative stranger to her, I did not trouble myself about the matter. One Sunday I received a note from her asking me to call at six o'clock. I went, and she then told me, with tears of despair in her eyes, that she and her sister had allowed themselves to be induced to speculate enormously in Suez Canal stock; that they had sold large quantities; that these shares were going up, and that if this rise continued for many days longer they would be ruined. "And yet," she said, "it is a purely fictitious rise. These shares are not worth three-quarters of their quoted price, and it would be an act of justice to enlighten public opinion on the point. The friend who unfortunately and quite straightforwardly led us into this frightful speculation has sent me a report which I have here. I beg you to read it. You will, I am sure, be struck by its conclusions and you would assist us by publishing the information it contains."

I was extremely embarrassed. "I am utterly ignorant about such matters," I said, "but since you say this report contains truths which ought to be known, I will read it and send it to competent persons who will see what ought to be done with it."

As I had invited some people to dinner at my house, I took the report, put it in my overcoat pocket and returned home at once. I hung up my overcoat in the hall and dressed hastily. My guests arrived and we sat down to

table. Of course, I had not had time to look at the report. While I was at dinner a telegram was handed me and I asked to be allowed to read it. It was signed by Baron Sartorius, a well-known banker and speculator. The telegram was as follows:

"Monsieur, I am sure you will have laughed on finding, in the report handed you this afternoon, a letter from me to the Princess, but I know you are a man who understands things, and I count on your not being offended."

Immediately after dinner I went to get the report which was still in my overcoat pocket, and I discovered with it the following letter from the Baron:

"Dear Madame la Princesse: Enclosed is the report I mentioned to you. Sometimes these great journalists are delighted to have their work done for them and to show that they are capable on all subjects. If you succeed in getting this report published it will be an immense affair, and I promise you that those sapphires and diamonds which attract you so often to the Rue de la Paix shall be yours."

The next day I received the following typewritten and unsigned lines:

"I have again been defeated. Really, I am most unskilful when I undertake a struggle with you. But it does not matter. I do not despair. I shall finally have my revenge."

A year later I was present at a costume ball given by the famous bimetallist, Henri Cernuschi, in his beautiful house in the Parc Monceau. The ball was a magnificent one. Toward one in the morning, as I crossed a drawing room, I found myself face to face with the Princess. She wore the splendid costume of an odalisk. On her forehead, round her neck and arms and on her breast gleamed, with an incomparable luster, a superb setting of sapphires and diamonds. Behind her walked Baron Sartorius and Baron Hoftenhausen, two great financial powers. "*Mon Dieu*, Princess," I said to her; "how radiant you are, and what magnificent jewellery!"

The two Barons bowed with a very satisfied air, as if the compliment had been for them. The Princess, turning to me with a haughty smile, said in a slightly ironic voice:

"You see now, I finish up by having my revenge."

"Yes, madame," I replied; "I see you have, but it is neither the revenge of the diplomatist nor of the financier—it is the revenge of Venus!"

CHAPTER XI

A Life Struggle

In February, 1882 (for it was during the years immediately following the Congress of Berlin that the most mysterious incident in my career took place), I was living in the Avenue Marceau, which was then called the Avenue Joséphine, after the Empress, but with the advent of the republic a change was effected in its name and sex. One morning, while I was at work in my study, my servant announced to me that a lady, with a letter of introduction from the manager of the *Times*, wished to speak to me.

The manager of the *Times* was then Mr. John MacDonald, a Scotchman, who was a rigid Protestant, and exceedingly simple in his habits. It was by no means easy for the numerous persons who naturally besieged a man in his position to gain access to him, and during the seven years he had been manager of the paper, as successor to Mr. Mobray Morice, he had only sent me one letter of introduction, presenting Mr. George Buckle, who was on the *Times* staff, and who became editor-in-chief. I realised instantly, therefore, and especially on learning that my visitor was a lady, that, either because of her own merits or because of those of her friends, she must be a person of importance—not a mere nobody—whom I was bound to receive with consideration. I gave instructions for her to be ushered into the drawing-room,

as my writing-room was somewhat encumbered, and I went in to see her.

On entering the room I found her seated in a corner holding in her hand an envelope bearing the crest of the *Times*. She rose and handed it to me. Mr. MacDonald's letter was closed, for, even in these details, English and French customs differ. In France, letters of introduction are left unsealed. French politeness requires that the person introduced should know in advance the terms in which he is presented. In England, where mere formalities have less importance than the real thing, a letter of introduction is closed, so that the writer may be free to say only what he wishes.

Mr. MacDonald's letter introduced to me Madame Georgine Elou. He informed me that he did not give me her family name, as she desired to keep it secret. He earnestly insisted that I should do all in my power to satisfy the "bearer of these lines," her cause being most interesting and one to the success of which he would be most happy to contribute. He added that the lady herself would give me verbally all the information I might desire, and that, in obliging her, I should be rendering a service to persons dear to my manager, and defending a cause worthy of my intervention.

After reading the letter I turned toward my visitor and asked her by what name I should address her. She replied that I must call her Madame Elou, and added that she had something confidential to ask of me. I begged her, accordingly, to come into my study, and she rose to follow me. I was then able to examine her at my ease, and I was struck by the strangeness of her appearance. Very tall, dressed in a dark gray robe of very light material,

with her mantle folded under her left arm, her figure seemed to be extremely elegant. She had the supple and slender grace and the refined vigour of a huntress of the forest or the mountain. Her well-gloved hands looked unmistakably aristocratic. Her long neck was graceful though strong, and her beautiful head well-poised. Her hair was dark and wavy, with a fine luster as the sun shone upon it through the window of the room. She had strong, intelligent, dark-blue eyes, which seemed darker than they really were, under the shadow of her long lashes. Her nose was faultless, and her mouth, though rather large, was richly coloured when she smiled, and displayed dazzling white but somewhat large teeth. Her cheeks, which were pale, but warm and full, were slightly elongated toward a chin the girlish and artistic outline of which, in spite of its strength, gave to this strange physiognomy an expression of infinite sweetness—softening and pacifying, as it were, this willful, proud, imperious but saddened feminine face.

I was deeply impressed by her rare beauty, and by the majestic and imposing prestige of her bearing, and by an aristocratic refinement which gave her a sort of royal air, so that it was not without embarrassment that I besought her to tell me what had induced her to wish to see me. She took a seat, and, in a voice sonorous, tender and exceedingly flexible, but easily warming with passion, and even becoming now and then somewhat hoarse and rough, she said:

"Ever since I have been able to think for myself and to reflect upon my own feelings and emotions I have been a prey to the strongest contradictions. I am twenty-three years old, and for ten years my mind and

soul have been troubled and tormented by ceaseless struggle. I have abandoned myself to the most ardent religious faith, given myself up to untiring charity; I have dreamed of being a saint among saints, and have traversed this world, my eyes ever turned toward Heaven —yet never have I been able to find real peace of mind. I cannot tell you now how far I have gone, nor what means I have adopted, in order to secure that peace of soul for which I am ever longing and which forever escapes me. I have remained virtuous; I have obeyed my conscience, and imposed silence upon my heart. I have accepted all the severities that have been ordered by my spiritual advisers, and I have wept bitterly in my efforts to chase away the sorrows which are undermining me. I fancied I had found refuge, but I had to abandon it, and I have been once more plunged into the whirlpool of life, where I remain incapable of discovering the path which I ought to follow.

"In all this world there is but one being whose will could calm me, the sight of whom could have an effect upon me, whose words could bend my will: it is the Pope. I want him to hear me, to listen to me. He is the shepherd of our souls, for I am a Catholic, and a Roman Catholic. He is the Will that directs, the Force that binds, the Reason that guides, the Voice that speaks, and what I ask you, for I know you can do it, is to persuade him to receive me, to hear me, to heal me.

"I have long been seeking to attain this end. I have made inquiries and taken advice; and finally, those interested in me, influential persons who are able to realise their desires, asked Mr. MacDonald to give me a letter to you, a letter as urgent as possible, begging

you to put me on the road to the Vatican and to open the doors behind which Leo XIII. listens patiently to those who need the infallible consolations which he holds in reserve for suffering souls seeking the path of salvation and peace. I cannot tell you any more at present, but I beg you to do all that you can so that the Holy Father may in his bountiful indulgence grant me the favour I implore of him.

"I am leaving for Rome to-morrow. I do not ask you to give me a letter of introduction, as that might be confounded, in spite of you, with thousands of such letters addressed to the Holy Father.

"What I do ask is that you will use your influence in obtaining for me, not so much the audience, but the kind greeting which I need. From Monday next I will go every day to the post-office in Rome for the letter in which you will announce to me either the failure or success of your efforts—the letter in which you will either tell me that I must renounce my hopes or point out the course I must take in order to realise them."

Without waiting for an answer, she handed me a sheet of paper on which was written "Georgina Elou, Poste Restante, Rome." She then bowed, and with her figure proud and erect and her head slightly bent she began to move in the direction of the door.

I stopped her almost imperiously, for I felt that in quitting me thus, in leaving without waiting for my reply, she was giving me a sort of order.

"Do not hurry away, madame," I said, "for I see absolutely no means at present of attaining the end which you have in view. I do not say that if you go to Rome you will find no way of being received by the Pope, who

has a prodigious faculty for displaying almost superhuman force, but, as far as I am concerned, I cannot give you anything but a letter of introduction, and, however pressing it may be, it would no doubt meet the usual fate of all such letters, and be, I fear, a great disappointment to you. I am going to Rome, though, in a few weeks' time. Here is the address of a friend of mine in the Eternal City. You might call there and ask if I am expected, and in case you have not already succeeded in your enterprise when I arrive, call to see me and I will consider what can be done. For the present, madame, I can only bid you Godspeed."

She remained for a moment perfectly still, a prey, as was evident, to bitter disappointment. As usual, my influence had been exaggerated. She had fancied that a letter from me would suffice to banish all difficulties. She thought, also, perhaps, that it was merely my own will which stood in the way of the immediate realisation of her desire. She gazed at me with sad eyes, her nostrils dilating, and her imperious lips ready to express what she thought. But as she gazed she no doubt read on my face an expression of real sincerity, and even of regret, at my own impotence. Instantly her face softened. The look of anger disappeared like a mask lifted by an invisible hand. Her extremely mobile features expressed painful regret, her eyes dropped with a touching expression of repentance and gratitude, and with a melancholy smile she said:

"I thank you very much—very much indeed. I beg your pardon for the unjust thought which you saw I had. I shall go to Rome and I will do all that I can. If I succeed, I shall not trouble you during your visit to the

Eternal City. If I do not succeed, though, I shall take advantage of your offer and ask you to receive me."

Whereupon, with queenly grace, she bowed again without offering her hand, and I escorted her to the hall door.

A few days later I called on Monseigneur De Rende, who was then at the Nunciature in Paris in the Avenue Bosquet. My visit to Rome had been planned sometime before, but I did not care to go thither without being sure of the audience upon which I had set my heart. I knew that I should see King Humbert and the principal members of his Government. But I did not want this to prevent my obtaining from Leo XIII. the kindly reception to which I aspired.

Monseigneur De Rende had for some time been occupied with this problem, displaying on my behalf a zeal quite as great as the sympathy which he always showed me. He was convinced, too, that, in preparing my visit to the Vatican, he would be serving the cause which he was defending. Monseigneur De Rende had succeeded Monseigneur Czaski, who had honoured me with his friendship, and he had learned from his predecessor that I had certain claims to his own good-will. Monseigneur De Rende, who had only held this office a very short time, had hitherto followed the policy of the former Nuncio—that is to say, instead of being a partisan of reactionary ideas in France, he had become the exponent, to the French Government, of Leo XIII.'s liberal policy.

He informed me that he had every reason to believe he would be able to settle the question of my journey to Rome in a way agreeable to me, and he announced that in all probability he would have a favourable reply

to give me before the end of March, so that I might prepare to leave Paris toward the end of the month. In that case, I should arrive in Rome in the early days of April.

On March 7th he sent for me and gave me a letter for Cardinal Jacobini, with whom he had arranged matters and who was quite prepared to receive me.

A few days later I left Paris with a friend, who consented to be my secretary, and I reached Rome on the 4th of April, 1882.

I put up at a hotel in the Corso, where rooms had been retained for me, and the following day I was informed that King Humbert would receive me on the 8th of April. On the sixth, after having delivered Monseigneur De Rende's letter, Cardinal Jacobini informed me that the Holy Father would receive me on April 10th, at noon, in his private oratory. On that same day, the sixth, my servant told me that the lady I had received some weeks before in Paris was in the small waiting-room leading out of my *salon*, and that she wished to see me.

Madame Elou was accordingly shown in. She was dressed in black, and her face was very sad. She had scarcely taken a seat when she burst into tears. She told me that all she had done had proved in vain; that the persons to whom she had appealed had asked her to state precisely the object of the audience which she desired, and that when she demurred to this they had, one and all, refused to do anything for her. She had then appealed to Sir Augustus Paget, but he had observed to her that he was accredited to the Quirinal and could in no way serve her at the Vatican. Thereupon, she had come to me, and she now begged me to intervene and

to procure for her a favourable reply, which I alone was in a position to obtain.

She had written to Cardinal Jacobini, and her letter, which was somewhat obscure, had remained unanswered. She had not ventured to write to the Pope himself, lest the letter should be seen by Cardinal Jacobini, as she feared his relentless opposition to her request.

I promised her I would do what I could, and bade her come to see me on the 11th of April—that is to say, the day after my audience with the Pope.

On the 8th of April I had an interview with King Humbert, which lasted the lifetime of two big cigars. On the 10th, at noon, I found myself in the anteroom, waiting to be introduced into the presence of the Holy Father.

Twenty minutes later I entered Leo XIII.'s private oratory. I had not enquired as to the ceremonial to follow. It was only when I perceived the Holy Father that I began to wonder what I ought to do. The Pope, however, did not leave me time to hesitate. With the most touching affability, as soon as I advanced toward him, he rose, and as he took a step forward he held out his hand to me. I bent over it with respectful emotion.

Leo XIII. appeared to me most imposing. His tall, slight, elegant figure, clothed entirely in white, stood out with natural majesty against the simple and solemn framework of his oratory, in which a rather ornate altar was the most conspicuous object.

He took an armchair which stood in front of the altar and made a sign to me to occupy another one near him. As soon as the Holy Father was seated, I sat down and

the conversation commenced. The Pope spoke sometimes in French, sometimes in Italian, but always rapidly and in a sonorous voice. He often remained motionless, but at certain moments he would half rise from his chair in an impetuous way when he felt anything deeply—and all this added to the impression he made on me.

In the robe of white woolen material, which clothed him like a shroud, he seemed like a voluntary captive who had sacrificed the incomparable joy of liberty for the sake of defending the rights committed to his care.

During the long hour I spent with him I noticed that his clear, melancholy eyes were presently fixed with painful intensity on the City of Rome, on the high hills that surround it, on the Quirinal which faces the Vatican, and on that splendid landscape which he could only partially see through the bars that he had voluntarily forged to his prison.

I regret that I may not write all that the Holy Father said to me, but a solemn promise which I made has sealed my lips forever with regard to this interview. But without breaking my word, I think I may say that toward the end of the conversation, recalling my promise to Elou, I submitted the ardent prayer of my protégé to the Universal Father of Catholics.

I had scarcely broached the subject when he interrupted me: "Yes," he said, "I know, without possessing definite details, the case of the person of whom you speak. One of my bishops of Great Britain has spoken of her to me. I did not expect that you would mention her, but since you have done so, introduce her to the Cardinal, and tell him from me to arrange with her the

day when I can receive her, and to submit this arrangement for my approval."

I then thanked His Holiness warmly, as I left him after receiving his final benediction.

On the following day Elou came to see me. This time she offered me her delicate, aristocratic hand, which was hot and feverish. She then threw herself at my feet.

"If it be a refusal which you bring me, prepare my reason to receive the blow. If it be the realisation of my hopes, my blessing is yours in advance for the good you will do me. During the last few days I have been troubled with insomnia or frightful dreams. Every mortal enemy of the peace of human beings seems to have laid siege to my soul and to have inflicted upon it tortures for which there is no name."

"The Pope will receive you," I said to her in a reassuring tone.

I thought for an instant that she was going to faint. Then with a cry of joy which I shall never forget, she clasped her hands and burst into tears, exclaiming:

"Blessed be God, My Saviour and my Angel, who protects me!"

She was as one transfigured. A supernatural calm then took possession of her, and there was something divine about her beauty, from which a certain grandeur and solemnity emanated, changing the very atmosphere of the commonplace hotel drawing-room.

Two days later I conducted her into the presence of Cardinal Jacobini. We went up that straight, interminable staircase which leads to the top floor on which is the Cardinal's study. The Under-Secretary of State had received the Holy Father's orders. He listened to

Elou with paternal kindness, mingled with a sort of tender, indulgent pity. He arranged with her the day when she was to be received by the Pope, and was about to continue the conversation, when the door of his study was suddenly pushed open, and I beheld in the ray of penetrating sunlight a priest of imposing aspect dressed in ecclesiastical robes cut out of some heavy, silky material the stiff folds of which fell in long, impressive lines. The newcomer had dark hair and a powerful forehead, which sheltered deep, somber-looking eyes, almost hard in expression, but which seemed to light up his whole face. It was a sudden and unexpected vision of incontestable beauty.

The Cardinal rose with eager deference, introduced me, and gave the name of Cardinal Ledochowski. Elou fell on her knees, almost in front of the Cardinal, whose pastoral ring she kissed timidly, and we then went out together. She enlarged on the impression made upon her by Cardinal Ledochowski, and it seemed to me that her sympathies and admiration were much more directed toward the dignified priest than toward the amiable Cardinal Jacobini, who had been so gracious and kind, and whose sympathetic but unimposing manner in no way corresponded to the ecclesiastical ideal of Elou's imagination.

She had, however, attained her end. Her joy was immense, almost overwhelming. She was to be received by the Holy Father within a few days. She entered St. Peter's to pray. My own mission was accomplished and I bade her good-by, as I was leaving Rome for Naples.

I never expected to see her again.

A few weeks after my return to Paris, when the memory of Elou was beginning to fade out of my mind, I received the following letter from her:

"I have had the great joy of being received by the Holy Father, and the mere sight of him sufficed to give me such peace of mind and such calm as I had not known for a long time. I explained to His Holiness the cause of my suffering, which he appeared to have some idea of. After what has taken place I feel obliged to tell you the object of my journey, the nature of my struggle, my hopes and my disappointments. You had the delicacy never to ask me what my object was and why I wished to go to Rome; and it is of my own free will that I tell you now, for you must be informed in order to help me. Ever since my childhood I have been troubled with strange contradictions. I will not prolong my story by telling you about my early years. When I arrived at the age of discretion a struggle began in my soul between the highest good and the greatest evil; and I have been obliged to combat, with the same ardour, the invasion of evil when I was doing what was right, as the empire of good when I felt drawn into sin. When I was twenty, in order to escape from this battle, I entered a convent, where the rigid discipline is a constant protection against human temptations. I remained there two years, and was about to take definite vows when an act of startling revolt caused the Superior to send me away from the convent. I was in such despair that later on she took me back, but once again, just as I was to take the vow, my spirit of insubordination induced another outburst, which frightened the entire Order, and I was once more expelled. Ever since then my soul has constantly been tempted. I am haunted by ideas of the greatest crimes, and I perceive clearly that my salvation or my destruction depends upon a final effort which will restore me to God or condemn me to hell.

Hence my visit to the Holy Father. I came to ask him to insist upon the Superiors of my Order making a final effort to wrest my soul definitely from the haunting powers which torture and besiege it. The Holy Father had pity on me. He said that he would do what he could. He has done so, and I have just been informed that he expressed to the Superiors his ardent desire to see me enter the convent again. The reply was that I had already made two attempts and that it was utterly futile and impossible to allow me a third. And the Holy Father thereupon sent me word that his authority does not exceed the expression of a wish, and that he neither has the power, the right nor the will to command. I am told that there are exceptions to this rule, and that if an English Ambassador were to ask the Holy Father to do this for him as a personal favour he would not be refused. Now, as you have shown me so much kindness, I venture to ask you to obtain the intercession of the British Ambassador in Paris, who is a friend of yours. Have mercy on me. Take pity on my soul, which otherwise is irremediably lost."

This letter both affected me deeply and annoyed me. I had obtained for Elou all that was humanly possible, and I began to look upon her as having a soul beyond all cure, haunted by visions to which she dared not confess. Hence, after long reflection, I replied as follows:

"Madame: I am very grateful to the Holy Father for the kindness he has shown you and the signal favour manifested in taking into account your painful situation and in intervening for you with your Superiors. But I cannot possibly join you in insisting further with him; and the energetic, I will even add, almost indomitable, persistency which you employ in striving by main force to open sacred doors that have been closed to you proves

to me that your Superiors and the Pope, better informed as to your character, know you more thoroughly than you know yourself, and that the refusal opposed to your perseverance is the just and logical consequence of your Superiors' acquaintance with you. Endeavour to master yourself in the world outside convent walls. Make your novitiate all alone there, proving that you deserve other treatment and that you have within yourself the energy and spirit of submission requisite for that life."

A single line was the reply to this letter:

"My soul is irremediably lost."

. . . . . .

In the summer of 1881 I paid a visit to an old friend who was living at Petites Dalles, on the Normandy coast. I was struck by the picturesqueness of this little port when seen from the coast of St. Martin. It is one of those poetical landscapes which one sees on the Riviera, along the Corniche, between Nice and San Remo. My friend, to whom I expressed my admiration of the view, said to me:

"Why do you not build here a temporary refuge where you may find repose amid the ceaseless agitation of your existence?"

We were promenading at the time in the single street of the village which leads from the valley to the beach. I looked up at the cliff on my left and said to my friend:

"If I can buy that little plateau there on the edge of the cliff, with the clump of beeches behind it, I will do so, and build a house there for my old days."

My friend was delighted at the idea, and as I was leaving that very evening, he promised to investigate

LES PETITES DALLES, IN NORMANDY
Showing the country house of M. de Blowitz, situated on the top of the hill

the matter for me. Forty-eight hours had not elapsed since my return to Paris when I heard from him that the owner accepted my price and that the bargain was concluded.

In 1883 my little chalet, called by the peasants "*Les Lampottes*," because of the two small towers in the façade, was finished. I had only to settle down there. But between the two little towers, or *lampottes*, there was a large empty space under the sharp angle of the roof. I ought to say that this façade has obtained a great reputation among architects, and that not a season goes by without some of them visiting it, as they consider it the true Norman type. But I repeat that the angle between the *lampottes* and the summit of the roof was then empty, and this formed a gap which I was most anxious to see filled up. One afternoon, at Rouen, in the courtyard of a dealer in antiquities, I was struck by the artistic beauty of a statue of the Virgin with the Child Jesus in her arms. The statue had been carved out of one immense half of the bole of an oak. I took the measurements of it, and, as I had in my pocket the plan of my country house, I noticed that this statue, including its pedestal, would exactly fit into the empty space of my Norman façade. The next day I asked the antiquary to sell it to me.

"Oh!" said he, "this is a statue of which I am very fond, for its harmony rests the eye, but I will gladly sell it to you. I bought it at the demolition of a nunnery, which was pulled down on the plea of public utility, but ever since I have had it it has taken away my peace of mind. It always seems to me that all kinds of faint sounds are buzzing about it at night. Besides, I cannot

succeed in keeping it recumbent, and when upright it annoys me. A dozen times I have laid it on the ground, but the next day I have found it upright without being able to explain how or why, and my wife, frightened by this phenomenon, begs me to get rid of it."

"Very well," I said with a smile; "as I want to place her upright against a wall, she won't wish to change her position."

I had the Virgin transported in a hay-cart from Rouen, and a week later the fisher peasants of Petites Dalles, in their playful way, had baptised my little château *Notre Dame des Lampottes.*

In 1887, about the beginning of August, as I was seated on the terrace of the chalet, in the silence of the countryside which was only broken by the regular motion of the sea under the cliff, a peasant from the village approached and, lifting his hat, said to me:

"There is a lady at the foot of the path who begs you to come down to see her, for she is here only for a short time and cannot come up."

I immediately put on my hat, and, taking a stick, I descended to the road, where my unknown visitor was waiting for me. As I approached the open carriage drawn up under the ample shadow of a huge tree, I uttered a cry of surprise. It was Elou. Her face was pale and worn, but her eyes burned with a feverish light. She wore an extremely elegant travelling dress and an immense hat adorned with brilliant, black ostrich feathers. On seeing me she uttered a sort of suppressed, hoarse cry, but her movement was one of joy when she explained her delight at having found me again. I drew near and greeted her.

"How is it you are here?" I asked. "And why did you not come up to my door?"

"I am here because I was told to come to you," she replied. "I did not go to the house because I perceived, from a distance, on your façade a statue which at the nunnery was known as the 'rigid Virgin.' I have so often knelt before her, bowing my head to the very dust at her feet, that I do not care to enter a house over which she seems to watch."

"Oh, I entreat you," I said, "come up to the chalet. We will take the other path, if the sight of the 'rigid Virgin' impresses you so deeply. You might stay several days here and the quiet of my home will bring you peace."

"Never, never! She has made me suffer too much. She has been too inflexible. She hates me. I will not sleep under the same roof with her."

I was filled with an immense pity. I felt that I was in the presence of a being utterly possessed by an incurable ill. The poor woman's reason had given way, and she was haunted by visions and fancies which baffled all logic and will-power.

"But why did you come up here?" I asked.

"Because I was directed to go to Eletot with you so that you might be a witness of the meeting which is to take place there. I beseech you to get into the carriage with me and to take me there, for I do not know the road."

It is an hour's drive from Les Petites Dalles to Eletot. The road passes by Sassetot, leaving on one side Les Grandes Dalles, the shady villas of which one sees right along the coast. The village of Saint-Pierre-en-Port is passed, and from thence, by a road which is to-day an exquisite avenue shaded by great trees, where the air is

balmy and delicious, one reaches Eletot. On the way Elou told me of her despair on receiving my letter, because she knew that she would never succeed in inducing the Superiors to grant her a new trial. She told me of the nights she had tried to spend in prayer, in search of what she called her peace of mind, of the futility of her efforts to escape the visions that haunted her vigils and her sleep. She declared that during the night she received orders which she had tried to resist, but which she finally obeyed, for she no longer had any hope of escaping from them by entering a convent. She assured me that she was at present carrying out the latest order she had received; that she had just returned from Scotland, where she had left the last refuge in which she had thought to recover her peace of soul; that she was bound to go to Eletot, and that she had been equally obliged to beg me to accompany her thither.

"Do you remember," she said, "that, when we went to see Cardinal Jacobini, a man of imposing appearance entered. It was Ledochowski, and it is he who has done me the greatest harm which I have ever experienced in all my life. He appeared to me first as an archangel who would heal all my wounds. I have seen him since and told him all my tortures, entreating him to be my confessor. My admiration for him appeared to irritate him; he refused to become my spiritual adviser, and one day when I insisted that he should protect me against myself, he rose suddenly, extending his hand, and showed me the door, exclaiming:

"'Away, away, cursed woman, for when you cross my threshold you fill my soul with the terror of everlasting punishment!'

"I quitted him, and since then I have felt that I was abandoned by Heaven and destined to irremediable destruction."

We reached Eletot, a little village not far from the sea, separated from the waters of the channel by a great plain behind the little Roman church of the style so often seen along the coast. We left the carriage at the entrance of the village. I had very rarely been there and had never stopped in the place, but Elou seemed to know it perfectly well. She took the path behind the church which leads to the plain by the sea. She crossed the corn and wheat-fields at the edge of the plain. For a few moments she gazed at the steeple of St. Pierre-en-Port which emerged on the right from the verdure of the hills. She shook her head and, turning, while she gazed upon the sea, with her arms stretched out, exclaimed:

"Yes, I know where I am—this is the spot. It is here I am to find him of whom I am in search and who is in search of me. Ah, yes, it is here; I am going to him!"

"Thank you, thank you," she added. "You have guided me to him, and it means rest!"

Then with her arms outstretched and her figure magnified, as it were, by a superhuman effort, she dashed forward across the plain. At the edge of the steep cliff, high over the sea, the plain had broken off abruptly, and thus it is that this marvellous expanse of water has never been utilised, and that the point, where this plain and the sea meet, appears to be haunted by a spirit of solitude and aridity.

Elou had rushed with extraordinary speed toward the east side of the plain, where stakes and wire fencing have been fixed to prevent people from falling into the sea, for

when the tide rises the waters bathe the base of the cliff. Before I had recovered from my surprise Elou was some six hundred feet ahead of me. So rapidly had she run along that the breeze had detached one after another from her hat-brim the great, black ostrich feathers, and as she bounded on with outstretched arms her skirts floated about her like wings, while the feathers of her hat, borne up by the wind, emphasised strangely the madness of her flight. I tried to overtake her, but it was all in vain. I had not gained half the distance when I saw that she had reached the edge of the cliff. For a moment she stopped, looked all about her, uttered a terrible cry of anger and despair, and as quick as a flash sprang over the wire paling which protects the passers-by from falling into the sea.

Breathless I reached the spot and gazed all around. I passed beyond the circle protected by the wire hedge and watched the waves that rose and fell gently under my feet. I could see nothing whatever of Elou. The surface of the sea wore its habitual aspect. Merely the ostrich feathers, borne up on the wind, flitted across the great expanse as if drawn outward and downward to the sea. Two men strolling along by the wire fence came up to me.

"You are looking for something?" they asked.

"Yes," I replied. "It seems to me that on the edge of the cliff, outside the wire fence, I saw a person with outstretched arms. Did you notice anything?"

The two men looked at each other.

"We have seen nothing," they replied, "yet we have been near all the time."

LES LAMPOTTES
M. de Blowitz's country house in Normandy

We all three gazed at the sea. The two men went their way; I lingered on for a long time on the edge of the cliff. I called out, but no voice answered mine, and my search was all in vain. And never since, in spite of my investigations and of my despairing researches, never since, either dead or alive, have I been able to discover the slightest trace that was capable of explaining to me either the enigma of her life or the mystery of her death.

CHAPTER XII

Why France Did Not Go to Egypt

It is a strange fact, but it has often been observed that the most serious events owe their origin to very small causes. But it is far more strange, and the story, I believe, has never yet been told, that the Egyptian question, which for twenty years has been affecting the pleasant relations between England and France, which at a certain moment brought them within a hair's-breadth of war, and which for a long time yet will loom in the international horizon like some evil phantom of discord, was occasioned by an accident of the smallest importance. If France did not go with England to Egypt, it was merely on account of a certain portfolio. The following is the history of the affair:

The 7th of November, 1881, the day on which the Gambetta Cabinet was formed in Paris, fell on a Monday. On Saturday, November 12th, I went to see M. de Freycinet to ask him whether there was any truth in the report that he had refused to enter into M. Gambetta's combination and become a member of his Cabinet.

"People say," I told him, "that you have refused to enter into this combination because you wished to lessen the importance of it in the eyes of the public, and because your refusal to associate yourself with it would, you thought, prevent it from becoming the 'Great Ministry,'

as every one was prepared beforehand to style the Gambetta Cabinet."

"That is absolutely inexact," replied M. de Freycinet. "I did not refuse to enter the combination. It is just the reverse, for I accepted a long time ago the offer M. Gambetta made me. What I did refuse was to accept the portfolio which M. Gambetta has just tendered me under very singular circumstances, which I will explain to you. There had been an understanding for a long time past between M. Gambetta and myself that, when he should be called upon to form a Cabinet, and there seemed every likelihood of that coming to pass, I should, in that Cabinet, be appointed Minister of War. I had said to him: 'I want that appointment because it is, I may say, absolutely necessary to me. My adversaries have so often accused me of having by my presumption and incompetence organised the defeat in the second part of the war of 1870, that, in defense of my honour and of my patriotism, it is indispensable that I should be able to prove that I am capable of directing the War Office. I must, therefore, ask you, when forming your Cabinet, to give me this appointment, as the manner in which I fill it will afford me an opportunity of refuting all the slanderous accusations of which I have been the victim, and of rehabilitating myself in the eyes of the world.'

"M. Gambetta understood my persistency, approved of my reasons, and promised to satisfy my demands on this point.

"It was just then that I heard of the mission entrusted to M. Gambetta to form his Ministry, and I held myself in readiness to join it as Minister of War. But yesterday

evening, Friday, at six o'clock, M. Gambetta entered my house like a whirlwind. He explained to me that he was in a desperate hurry; that he was on his round to see all his collaborators, and had come to tell me that I should join his Cabinet as—Minister of Foreign Affairs. Without giving me time to answer, without even telling me the names of my future colleagues in the Ministry, he left me and continued his visits.

"As soon as he had gone I decided not to accept the change of office which he had proposed. I understood that at the Foreign Affairs Ministry I should be merely his clerk, and that he himself would be the real Minister. I knew very well that I should simply have to do as he dictated, that if things went satisfactorily he would have all the credit, and that I should be blamed for all the mistakes.

"Besides, it had been agreed that I should take the War portfolio. He knew why I wanted it. He understood my reasons and had approved of them, so in view of all this I wrote to him this morning, simply telling him that I regretted not being able to join his combination. This is all I have to say on the subject."

I quite understood the reasons which M. de Freycinet gave me, and as it was Saturday and I had no article to send to my paper that day, I decided to hold over what I had been told until the following day, intending then to see how much it would be wise to remember.

Later on the same day I went to a grand *soiréé* given by Madame Adam at her apartments in the Boulevard Poissonnière. There the main topic of conversation was the formation of the Gambetta Cabinet.

In the course of the evening I came across one of

Gambetta's intimate friends. He told me that he had seen the future Prime Minister that afternoon, and that he was very much annoyed with M. de Freycinet. He complained bitterly of the latter's defection, and it was evident that he considered the refusal as nothing more nor less than treachery.

I explained to my interlocutor the reasons M. de Freycinet had given me a few hours previous. I told him that those reasons perfectly justified the attitude of M. de Freycinet in my eyes, that they would justify him in the opinion of the public, and that I was convinced every one would blame M. Gambetta.

His friend, quite annoyed, assured me that he was absolutely convinced M. Gambetta had no idea of the motives which had dictated M. de Freycinet's conduct, and when I said that it would be a great pity if these two men were to be hostile to each other, and that at all costs this hostility should be prevented from breaking out, he replied that he was going to see M. Gambetta that very evening, that he would report to him what I had said, and the next morning, at eleven, he would come and tell me what M. Gambetta had replied and what could be done to prevent the rupture which seemed to both of us so undesirable. But at two o'clock in the morning there was a knock at my door and a letter was brought to me to the following effect:

"I have not been able to see Gambetta himself, but I learn on good authority that he is to go at nine this morning, Sunday, to see M. Grévy at the Elysée to communicate the result of his negotiations, and he will probably inform the President that, on account of M. de Freycinet's refusal, he himself will take over the

portfolio of Foreign Affairs. Therefore, after nine o'clock it would be too late to make any communication to M. Gambetta, so that if M. de Freycinet would like to have an explanation with him which might modify his plans it must take place before 8.30."

I rose at five o'clock, took a cab opposite my house, and drove to M. de Freycinet's. It was about six when I arrived there. M. de Freycinet was in bed. A candle was burning on a little table by his side and he was working by that light. He listened to me attentively, thanked me very much, and told me that at 7.30 he would be at M. Gambetta's. He was as good as his word. M. Gambetta, who was then living in the Rue St. Didier, was at his window smoking a cigar when he saw M. de Freycinet arrive.

At the outset the interview was far from agreeable. M. Gambetta reproached M. de Freycinet with not wishing to compromise himself in the former's Cabinet, so that he might keep free in order to succeed him. M. de Freycinet protested energetically and declared positively that no matter what might happen he would never succeed him. M. Gambetta was appeased, and when M. de Freycinet had explained the cause of his refusal, M. Gambetta, who was broad-minded and frank, admitted that his conduct had not been entirely blameless, so that the interview, which had commenced so unfavourably, ended in the most cordial manner. The next day, November 14th, the *Journal Officiel* contained the announcement of the formation of Gambetta's Cabinet, and the Ministry settled down to work without delay. From the time he came into power, Gambetta found

himself exposed to an underhand opposition, to unforeseen resistance, to inconceivable maneuvers and to implacable hostility. Among his secret adversaries, none was more zealous than M. de Freycinet, who, in spite of his explanation with the new Premier, had not forgiven him for not appointing him Minister of War.

The consequence was that a few weeks later the Gambetta Cabinet was defeated on the question of the *scrutin de liste* at elections.

This *scrutin de liste* had been haunting M. Gambetta for ten years.

In July, 1871, when I paid M. Thiers my first visit in the name of the *Times*, he said to me, "Gambetta and Faidherbe have conceived the idea of being voted for by universal suffrage, as they have their names at the top of the *scrutin de liste*." This was my first despatch to the *Times;* it was reproduced as a special telegram, and with it I inaugurated my entrance on the staff of that paper.

On the 26th of January, 1882, whilst M. Gambetta was delivering one of his finest speeches in defense of the *scrutin de liste*, I was walking in the Salle des Pas Perdus with M. Joseph Reinach. The great speaker was more eloquent than ever, and we could hear plainly the applause that greeted his arguments. He was pleading the cause of the *scrutin de liste*, and as, in spite of the applause, I expressed my fear lest M. Gambetta's Cabinet should be overthrown on account of this speech, M. Joseph Reinach said, "They cannot overthrow him; there is nobody to succeed him."

"What about M. de Freycinet?" I asked.

"M. de Freycinet," replied M. Joseph Reinach,

promptly, "has made a formal promise not to succeed M. Gambetta." Nevertheless, an hour later M. Gambetta was defeated, and M. de Freycinet, who was immediately asked to call at the Elysée, agreed, in spite of his promise, to succeed M. Gambetta.

"I shall never forget it," declared Gambetta when he was told the name of the Prime Minister who was to take his place.

And for six months Gambetta, who considered M. de Freycinet's acceptance as an act of treachery, made desperate onslaughts on his Cabinet on every question.

Now, on the 29th of July, 1882, a very serious matter was discussed; namely, whether France should or should not go with England to Egypt. M. de Freycinet had adopted an uncertain attitude, but on the whole seemed inclined to coöperate with England. M. Gambetta then rose and opposed M. de Freycinet's projects with an eloquence that was both aggressive and triumphant, and, with the assistance of M. Clemenceau, overthrew the Cabinet that very evening. M. Gambetta and his party were avenged.

A year later, when in Rome, I was talking to Cardinal Jacobini.

"Do explain to me," he said, suddenly, "why France refused to accompany England to Egypt."

I told the Cardinal the story of the portfolio which I have just related here, and I proved to him that if M. de Freycinet had been offered the post of Minister of War, which he greatly desired and had every reason to expect, instead of that of Minister of Foreign Affairs,

France would, at this moment, be with England in Egypt.

A smile such as one sees only on the lips of a Roman Cardinal hovered over his mouth, and he murmured in Italian, "Small causes, great effects!"

CHAPTER XIII

My Interview with the Sultan

When I left Paris, in 1883, for Constantinople, on the inauguration train of the Orient Express, Essad-Pasha, the Turkish Ambassador in Paris, gave me two letters of introduction, one for Saïd-Pasha, the Grand Vizier, the other for Munir-Bey, the Master of Ceremonies.

I had not hidden from Essad-Pasha my desire to avail myself of this visit to Constantinople for approaching the Sultan, and although the letters of introduction he gave me were, according to diplomatic custom, sealed, I am sure they mentioned my wish and suggested that I should be helped to carry it out.

On arriving at Constantinople, a good friend of mine who lives in that city called upon me. He knew every one and everything there, and I told him that I had come with some friends who were leaving in four days, that I wanted first to see Constantinople with them, and that I intended waiting until they had gone before using my letters of introduction, as I was staying a week longer than they were. My friend advised me to deliver the letters at once, and he undertook to see that they reached their destination.

Two days later, on Thursday, we were told that it was the eve of the Courbam-Baïram, and that the *fêtes* would commence on Friday and last until Monday evening.

This was a great disappointment to me. I understood

that I should not be able to meet any members of the official world until after the *fêtes*, on the following Tuesday. As I was to leave on the Saturday following, this left me only four days to settle the complicated question of an audience with the Sultan. During the three days I had been in Constantinople I had seen a great many people and had talked about a great many things, and I had begun to understand that this was no easy matter. The Sultan had never granted a private audience to any one in my position, and the persons on whom I was relying for asking the Sultan to receive me would more likely prevent my obtaining an interview than otherwise.

Missak-Effendi, the First Secretary of the Ottoman Embassy in Paris, a delightful man, a clever diplomatist, always pleasant and amiable, as well as a good linguist and an excellent functionary, had travelled with us. He told me that I ought not to leave Constantinople without seeing the Sultan, and he had mentioned the matter to Saïd-Pasha and to Munir-Bey. With his usual courtesy, he had told Munir-Bey not to forget to remind the Sultan who I was and in what capacity I was there, so that he might weigh his words and not lose sight of the fact that what he said to me would not escape publicity. To any one who knows Constantinople and the palace it will be very evident that after this recommendation, of which I knew nothing until my departure, there was no chance whatever of attaining the end I had in view through official influence. Neither Munir-Bey, Saïd-Pasha, nor any of those whose responsibility is publicly acknowledged, would have cared to risk the consequences of an audience accorded to me by

the Sultan. Abdul-Hamid is too attentive and too enlightened not to take into account the press, and particularly the independent press of Europe, and not to keep himself well posted about the various correspondences published in Europe. Now, as it happened, some of the correspondents of certain newspapers in Constantinople, by their free and independent criticism of Turkey and of the Ministers, and the deeds of the Sultan himself, had roused the susceptibilities of His Majesty, who still had a lively remembrance of some of those articles.

Who would be responsible if, in my turn, I should add to the Sultan's bitter impressions, and who could ask these high officials, whom a glance from their lord and master could annihilate, to accept the consequences of such an interview and to bear the responsibility of having brought it about and of having asked the Sovereign to grant it?

As my brief sojourn furnished timorous officials with a justification of their fears, it was quite probable and almost certain that I should not see the Chief of Believers before leaving his capital. A fresh circumstance added to the complication of the question.

The Friday after the Baïram I went to Thérapia to call on Lord Dufferin.

When I told him that I had left two letters of introduction from Essad-Pasha, the English diplomatist was of my opinion that the time was too limited for me to be able to count on an audience.

He assured me that Mr. Forster had obtained an audience, but that it had been postponed twice, and that, as he could not remain any longer, he had left without waiting for the day appointed the third time.

I thought, naturally, that if so important a personage

as Mr. Forster had been kept waiting like this I might as well give up all idea of succeeding. I asked Lord Dufferin, nevertheless, if he would not be kind enough to second me in my attempt. With his usual perspicacity and knowledge of all that concerns Oriental men and things, he saw immediately that we should have to avoid taking any direct, official step in the matter, as this would only create a fresh obstacle. He told me that he would write a private letter to Munir-Bey, merely informing him that I was among the passengers of the Orient Express, and suggesting that perhaps His Majesty might like to be informed of the fact. He did this that same day. I happened to know, too, that Munir-Bey was always pleased to receive information of this kind through an Ambassador, because in this way he was obliged to convey it to his chief without incurring the responsibility of having taken the initiative. The Sultan was, therefore, apprised on Saturday that I was in Constantinople, and when communicating to him the note from Lord Dufferin, those who presented it added that, having now discharged their duty, they had only to await the decision of the Sovereign. Under these conditions during the two next days a profound silence was maintained with regard to me. The amusing side of the affair was that two parties were formed round the Sultan on my account, in spite of the unimportance of my personality. Some had proceeded officially, almost compulsorily, and when once their official request had been made they had remained quiet, rather glad on the whole of the silence which was maintained with regard to me. Others, anxious, on the contrary, that I should see the Sultan, and in their enthusiasm for him convinced that this

interview could only leave an excellent impression on my mind, were most impatient as the hours slipped by and the hour of my departure approached. They could do nothing to break this silence themselves, nor to get it broken by others, prevented as they were by the note sent by an Ambassador and by the official intervention of those whose functions authorised them to intervene. Things went on in this way until Tuesday evening.

In three days' time I was to leave Constantinople.

On Tuesday evening I received from Saïd-Pasha the following letter:

"*Sir:* I had the pleasure of receiving the letter from His Excellency, Essad-Pasha, which you were kind enough to forward to me, and also the letter in which you ask for an interview. I regret that on account of my numerous occupations I could not reply earlier. I will let you know the day and hour when I shall be able to see you. Accept the assurance of my perfect consideration. SAÏD."

As I was to leave on Saturday, this letter was equivalent to a refusal, and I heard the very next day that on account of Abdul-Hamid's silence about the communication made by Lord Dufferin in his note, Saïd-Pasha deemed it prudent not to receive me, which fact was very evident from his letter.

Thereupon, I hastened the preparations for my departure, and that very evening went to keep an appointment which had been arranged for me with the Sheik Abul-Huda el-Rifai, the Grand Caziasker of Anatolia, in order to complete, at any rate, my interviews with the men of note of the capital.

My conversation with this eminent man lasted until

very late into the night, and I have heard since that the next morning he wrote to inform the Sultan about it.

The following day one of my friends came to tell me that he had just received the visit of a person who frequented the palace, who had told him that every one there wanted me to see the Sultan, but that no one dared introduce the subject for fear an official demand for an audience should exist, as that would prevent any other steps being taken.

I understood, then, the tact and *finesse* with which Lord Dufferin had acted, and I was able to declare that no official demand for an audience existed.

My friend appeared to be delighted.

That same day I had a visit from Waïss-Bey, the Turkish Consul-General in Venice, a very distinguished Orientalist, thoroughly devoted to the Sultan and connected with the palace. He is an active, intelligent man, very anxious to show up Turkey, of which he is an ardent defender, in its best light.

He appeared to know what was going on. We talked for a long time, and I heard later on that, on leaving me, he wrote a long letter which the Sultan would see, in which he pleaded warmly in favour of the audience. All these movements, all these applications, and one might even say all these struggles, were going on without my suspecting them in the least. As my visit was to come to an end in a couple of days, I considered my cause lost. In spite of this, the next day, Thursday, I heard that Philippe-Effendi, the editor of the *Vakhit*, the special journal of the Sultan, a man who is very devoted to His Majesty and who is broad-minded and a protégé of Osman-Bey, the First Chamberlain, had said

that I ought not to be allowed to leave without seeing the Sovereign. I knew, too, that Reschid-Bey, the Sultan's Chief Secretary, a very highly educated young man, in whom his master has every confidence and who looks at things in an unprejudiced way, was among those who were inclined toward the audience. Mr. Guaracino, too, an Englishman, who had been in Constantinople almost all his life, and who used to be a member of the English Consulate, a very active and intelligent man, who was liked by the Mussulmans and a great favourite everywhere, was particularly interested in the success of my enterprise. As I have said, all this agitation was going on around me, and the greatest precautions were taken so that I should not have any idea of it; yet I understood that all these people had not abandoned the cause and had not given up all hope of conquering the resistance opposed to them. I felt that I was breathing in an atmosphere which, even for Constantinople, was full of exceptional mystery. The Turks, who usually converse in a low voice, spoke still lower in my presence, and uttered Turkish monosyllables, almost in a whisper, as they glanced at me. I went about like an actor in a conspiracy on the stage, knowing that whatever happened, whether failure or success, the result would not be fatal to any one.

On Thursday, in the afternoon, Waïss-Bey came to tell me that it would be well for me to go the next day, Friday, to the Sćlamlik, which would take place at the Médidjeh Mosque near Dolma-Bagchi.

"But," I said, "I went to the Baïram last Friday and I saw the ceremony and the Sultan. There will be nothing fresh to see to-morrow."

"No matter—it's better to go; there's no knowing. It sometimes happens that the Sultan notices foreigners and asks to see them. Besides, you will see him again, and the ceremony is interesting."

"Very well, I'll go," I said. "At what time must I be there?"

"At midday."

He had just gone away when I received a message to the effect that Khaïr-eddin-Pasha would receive me the following day at Nichanne-Tache, at half-past nine in the morning. Soon after, one of my friends called to tell me that Saïd-Pasha would see me at Nichanne-Tache at six o'clock, Turkish time.

"What time will that be?" I asked.

My friend began to calculate and then replied, "Half-past eleven."

I reflected that if I went at half-past nine to see Khaïreddin, and at half-past eleven to Saïd's, I should never be at the Sélamlik at noon. But, as Saïd-Pasha had given me Turkish time, it was quite allowable for me to make a mistake of an hour in my calculations, and so arrive at half-past ten to see him. If he received me then, I should have time to go to the Sélamlik, and if he did not receive me, I could apologise and leave a few lines to him, explaining that it was impossible for me to wait.

In the evening I went to a dinner given in my honour at the Club. I asked Mr. Guaracino whether a seat at table had been purposely left vacant, and he told me that Philippe-Effendi was to have been there, but, he added, lowering his voice, "he must have gone to the palace to see whether there is anything fresh." I

finished the evening at the house of Mr. Smythe, a very pleasant sort of man, a director of the Ottoman Bank. I was able to admire at his house some charming specimens of the English colony, and I then returned at rather a late hour to the Hotel d'Angleterre. Early next morning, Weïss-Bey and Mr. Guaracino came to tell me that they would wait for me between half-past eleven and twelve, on the Dolma-Bagchi road, to take me to the guard-house which faces the Médidjeh Mosque, where I could see the Sultan quite close. I went to Khaïr-eddin's at half-past nine, and left him at half-past ten, to go to Saïd-Pasha's, who lives just opposite.

I had done well to go an hour earlier, for Saïd-Pasha received me at once.

When I took leave of him, although the hands of my watch pointed to a quarter to twelve, I feared that I should miss the Sélamlik.

I had scarcely departed from the house when I met Mr. Guaracino, who had brought a horse and had come at full speed to tell me that it was late. We found Waïss-Bey stamping about impatiently, and we went along at full gallop toward Dolma-Bagchi, when we were told that the Sélamlik was to take place at Bechik-Tache, and not at the Médidjeh Mosque. There, every one was waiting in a state of hesitation, for it was expected that the ceremony would have taken place at the Médidjeh Mosque, and, although the troops were drawn up, the officers present, and instructions had been given to the *softas*, yet at the last moment a counter-order might arrive, and the Sultan, with that persistent care not to appear in a locality that has been indicated beforehand, might change the meeting-place. In cases

of this kind nothing can give an idea of the rapidity with which this official change of quarters is effected. The troops, the officials of the procession, the horses and carriages, and the assembled crowd, disappear in the twinkling of an eye and go quickly to the mosque indicated without any surprise or displeasure, as though it were the most natural thing; the guard-house looks just as usual, and five minutes later a stranger passing by would never imagine that, only a few minutes before, a crowd had been waiting there, that soldiers had been drawn up in line, that rows of carriages with the horses unharnessed had been on the spot amidst all the ceremonials of an absolute government whose chief deigns to be saluted once a week. But when we saw that sand was being thrown on the ground where the Sultan was to pass, we understood that it was certainly here that the ceremony would take place. The Turkish finances are not in a state which allows of a waste of sand.

A few minutes later an aide-de-camp on horseback galloped up, announcing that His Majesty was about to leave the palace and come to the Mosque of Bechik-Tache.

I was then advised to mount on the highest of the steps leading to the guard-house, so that I might be above the crowd and see the Sultan.

My companions, however, looked greatly distressed. At Bechik-Tache the mosque is some distance from the guard-house. It is beyond the little triangular square, just opposite the door through which the Sultan enters. I was in the midst of all the foreigners who had rushed to see the ceremony, and if I should manage to see the Sultan, how could I have the slightest chance of being seen

by him! If just then I had suggested to my two companions that we should go away, they would have been delighted, so convinced were they that we were merely wasting our time and that I should simply witness the failure of their plans. As these thoughts were crossing my mind, a tall, strongly built man, dressed in a grey suit of European cut, holding a soft hat in his hand, crossed the square which the troops were guarding. He had a full face and dark complexion and a black, stiff mustache. He was quite out of breath as he approached us, and murmuring a few words to the officer in command of the guard-house, he then made a sign to us to follow him.

"It's Philippe-Effendi," said Mr. Guaracino; "he has an *irade* for us to have good places."

We went through the guard-house, turned down a small corridor to the right, and came into a drawing-room, which was very clean, and furnished with arm-chairs and a wide sofa occupying the whole length of the two windows which looked on to the square and the mosque. Evidently this word, *irade*, was of the same derivation as "irradiation." From the moment it had been pronounced in my favour I felt that luminous effluvia were irradiating around me. As we entered, the officers, with their gold lace, who were seated, rose, looked at me with respectful curiosity, and invited me to take a seat on the sofa. As soon as I was seated, a soldier brought me coffee and another one cigarettes. I had become the Sultan's guest.

Suddenly a great noise was heard in the street. The Sultan was approaching. Philippe-Effendi said a few words to Mr. Guaracino, who opened the lower part of

one of the windows, told me to get up on the sofa, and then invited me to sit down on the white marble of the window.

Every one drew back a little, and at the same moment, in obedience to an order given outside, a clear space was made in front of the window on which I was seated.

I was thus completely isolated both from the outside and the interior against the somewhat dark background of the room, with the sun full on me, showing me up in the foreground of the picture. I was seated sideways, my legs hanging over the sofa, my body leaning forward and my head out of the window.

I understood that I was posing for the Sultan.

"It is to be hoped," I said, in real terror, to Mr. Guaracino, "that there is no photographer here with his apparatus just facing us. My pose would certainly not be to my advantage."

. . . . . .

The cheering of the troops could be heard as the Sultan appeared in a close carriage with the windows drawn up. I did not see him very well. I knew he would look toward me—he could scarcely do otherwise, as I had been placed in such a conspicuous position, and I bowed with all the respect due to the Sovereign of the country. The carriage stopped, Abdul-Hamid entered the mosque, after turning round toward the crowd, and the *muezzin* having appeared on the gallery, we understood that prayers had commenced within.

I at once left my uncomfortable seat and entered the room again, but I had been inside only a few minutes when Philippe-Effendi suddenly rushed out.

"What's the matter?" I asked Mr. Guaracino.

"Another *irade*," he answered.

"Where?"

"There, the gentleman wearing a fez, who is just crossing the road."

He was right, for the *irade*, in the red fez, was talking to Philippe-Effendi. The latter soon returned and said:

"An order for us to be ready to go up to Yildiz-Kiosque after the Sélamlik."

Things were advancing very slowly, but still they were advancing. My pose at the window had not caused the Sultan to change his plans.

At this moment Mavroyeni-Pasha, a clever and witty Greek, who was private physician to the Padishah, came in.

We talked together for a few minutes.

"I am sorry you have not seen the Sultan," he said; "you would have acquired for yourself proof of the stupid untruths that are told about him. You would have seen for yourself how sound his mind is, how just he is, and how healthy, too. People say that he has all kinds of diseases, that he has scrofula, and is subject to fainting fits. It is infamous. I have never known him ill, and I am the most expensive luxury that he allows himself."

On looking round I noticed that Philippe-Effendi had disappeared.

"Where has he gone?" I asked Waïss-Bey.

"There's another *irade* on your account."

Philippe-Effendi came back again.

"Strict orders have been issued to take you to Yildiz-Kiosque. When there, a chamberlain will tell us what is to be done," he said.

My companions were radiant. Evidently one of those mysterious battles had been waged round the Sultan with regard to me—one of those battles the secret of which is guarded by the walls of the palace, and about which conquerors and conquered are equally silent. I was gradually penetrating it, and if I am able to tell all the details now, it is because, in the first place, I was able to observe everything for myself, and also because victory makes the conquerors more readily inclined to be communicative. Very soon the fourth and last *irade* arrived, and I knew from the faces of my friends that victory was nearly certain.

"An order to go to the Marshals' room and to wait there."

We were now in the stronghold—or rather, we were just about to enter.

"But who gives these orders, one after the other?" I asked.

"The Sultan communicates them to a chamberlain, who transmits them to officers on duty outside."

"Well, then, the Sultan is not at prayer?"

"No; that is one of the thousand European errors. The mosque is not a place entirely consecrated to prayer. People can pray everywhere, since Allah is everywhere. The mosque is principally a meeting-place; all things can be discussed there, and they are discussed. It often happens, too, like to-day," and they pointed to some servants who were carrying some trays, "that the Sultan invites those who are with him to take some refreshments. It is well to remember that the Sélamlik was instituted only by the reigning family. Formerly the Sultan always remained invisible, and he

might be assassinated in his palace and a successor substituted for him without the people's having any idea of it. It was therefore decided that, cost what it might, he should show himself at least once a week to his people. It once happened that a Sultan who was dangerously ill was nevertheless carried to the Sélamlik and died on his return to the palace."

Just at this moment military orders were heard, the music struck up, the horses began to paw the ground, people rushed to the windows, and Abdul-Hamid, leaving the mosque, took his seat in a victoria, with Osman-Bey at his side and two of his aides-de-camp opposite, and started. We left the guard-house; our carriages were waiting for us, and we drove to the palace by the new road. This road was a wonderful sight. It is admirably made, and rises in a gentle incline cut in the side of a green slope, with trees dotted about here and there. What remains of the hill out of which it was cut forms a declivity sloping on both sides, leading, one toward the new road and the other going down toward the old road. The two slopes, the whole length of our drive, were covered with men, women and children, who had hurried there to see the Sultan. These are the rare occasions when Turkish women and children leave their homes to see anything that is taking place without, and no Mussulman dare forbid his family to be present. On the green grass of the slopes, and under the slight shade of the trees, the bright, harmonious colours of the *ferehjes*, or striped mantles of two colours, red and yellow, violet and white, blue and pink, showed up in great brilliancy, punctuated with red by the caps of the boys, who were frolicking about in and out of the groups. The women

wore over their faces those veils which are more and more transparent, and against which, for mere form's sake, there are periodical *irades* ordering a return to thick veils; but these *irades* only cause fleeting tumult that scarcely lasts a day. The veil is, I believe, destined to disappear altogether soon, and Turkish women, conforming to the true precepts of the Koran, will show their faces, which have not been seen hitherto by curious travellers, and will only retain their flowing draperies, which cover their entire body in a perfectly modest manner.

As we reached the gate of Yildiz-Kiosque, a soldier, acting as sentinel, advanced toward us. Philippe-Effendi leaned forward and murmured the word *irade*. The soldier stepped back respectfully, and, by a path which starts from the gate and turns to the right a hundred yards farther along, we reached a low door and entered Yildiz-Kiosque. Philippe-Effendi left us for an instant in order to ask Osman-Bey, the first Chamberlain, to have us conducted to the Marshals' room. As soon as he entered it, a *cavedji* brought us some coffee and cigarettes. We were invited to sit down and asked to wait.

Ten minutes later a chamberlain appeared at the door, bowed, and asked me to follow him. We passed through two drawing-rooms, then along a large gallery divided by a red screen, and another drawing-room covered with fine matting, and the chamberlain, who walked in front of me, made a sign for me to wait there. I thought that this chamberlain was taking me to one of the Sultan's aides-de-camp, who would tell me when I could see his master, for so far neither Philippe-Effendi nor Waïss-Bey,

nor Mr. Guaracino—either because they did not know or because, with that stubborn discretion peculiar to Oriental diplomacy, they did not want to compromise themselves—none of the three could or would tell me which day would be fixed for my audience with the Sultan.

After a few minutes the chamberlain who was conducting me stopped in front of an open door, beckoned to me to approach, and I must confess that I was much surprised on advancing to find myself face to face with Abdul-Hamid, who was standing up in front of me. The Sultan was wearing the insignia of a Marshal of his army and the uniform of his Life Guards. His trousers were blue, with a double band of red, and were held by straps over his patent-leather boots furnished with rowels. On his straight coat he wore the military medal which had been presented to him by his army; his cloak was lined with red and finished with plain, large buttons of reddish gold, and on his head was a red *fez*.

Abdul-Hamid advanced to meet me and held out his hand. He was wearing gloves of soft, white kid, such as are adopted by European officers when on service. He invited me to sit on an armchair, and he sat down himself on a sofa covered with red damask with large blue flowers. He leaned back against a cushion and signed to a chamberlain who was standing in a doorway. This chamberlain was Raghib-Bey, and the Sultan ordered him to take the armchair near mine.

To my left, between the armchair on which I was seated and the sofa where the Sultan was, there was a small, wooden table, gilded and with a slab of *malachite*, upon which were placed an onyx match-box, a small

MONS. DE BLOWITZ,
as he traveled to Constantinople in 1883 and as he was received by
Sultan Abdul-Hamid

oval ash-tray, also of onyx, and a cigarette case of chased silver.

Raghib-Bey was to serve as interpreter. The presence of an interpreter certainly does prevent the conversation from being carried on rapidly, but this inconvenience is largely compensated by numerous advantages. In the first place, when one is in the presence of a personage like the Sultan, it is easier to express one's ideas to an interpreter, who will transmit them, than to the personage in question. Then, too, while he is replying, one can study his face without being preoccupied, because one does not understand what he is saying and one can also be preparing the conversation which is to follow.

During my interview I noticed these three advantages, and to begin with, I was able to study Abdul-Hamid at my ease.

He was rather above the average height, slight and almost thin; he had a brown skin, warm and dry looking; his beard was black, well groomed, and rather short and thick. His mouth was energetic, but sad; his nose, a regular Turkish nose, large, long and bony, with a slight deflection of the upper part of the nostril. His eyes were black, rather large, resolute, thoughtful, penetrating but not gentle looking; they were deep-set in the orbit, and as the light fell on one side of his face and left the other side in the shade, his eyes appeared to be remarkably deep-sunk. His forehead was wide and straight, of medium height and slightly furrowed. The black hair which was visible on his temples, between the *fez* and the beard, was short and almost close-shaven. Abdul-Hamid was then forty-one years of age, but he looked more, particularly as he had lost an upper tooth on the left side

near the middle. He spoke in a louder voice than his subjects; his language was sonorous, his words distinct, and his phrases lengthened out and terminated without any hesitation.

I expected to have Munir-Bey for interpreter, as he is the usual interpreter in such cases, but it was explained to me later that it would have been imposing upon Munir-Bey an extraordinary task to have made him act as interpreter for an interview which he had by no means facilitated.

"I am very glad," I said, bowing, as the Sultan signed for me to commence the conversation, "not to leave Turkey without being admitted to Your Majesty's presence, for, from all that I have seen and heard here, I believe that I am in accordance with the absolute truth in proclaiming that in Your Majesty are centred the great hope of this country and the most certain remedy possible for all the many evils from which it is suffering."

"I am very pleased to see you," he answered, "and I thank you for having wished to judge this country for yourself, for in Europe, and even in America, every one slanders it systematically, without taking the trouble to examine it closely. I am greatly encouraged in my desire to remedy the evils of this country by the fine qualities of its subjects and also by the great resources of the land. Those who maintain that Turkey is incurable, slander us deliberately, and as though on purpose. What is required? Ameliorations in our finances, in our laws and in our administration. I have already been able to reform the organisation of the finances with regard to the civil list. My Government has not con-

tracted any fresh loan for a very long time, and I have been able to arrange for the payment of the interest of the public debt. The floating debt is not as considerable as reported, but there must be some solution arrived at about it, so that it may not be an ever-increasing obstacle. People are wrong in representing me as opposed to liberty. I know that a country must keep up with the times, but the excess of a liberty to which one is unaccustomed is as dangerous as the absence of all liberty.

"A country to which one gives liberty which the people do not know how to use is like a man to whom one gives a gun the handling of which he does not understand. He kills his father, mother and brothers, and then finishes by killing himself. We must, therefore, prepare the country for this liberty, and that is what I am trying to do. I have opened schools, and these are being multiplied. Education in its various developments is the best means of preparing people for liberty. I have also organised an administrative school, which has given very good results; its pupils now occupy posts in our administrations—Raghib-Bey here present is one of them. You see the idea of making men capable of aspiring to liberty and of knowing how to use it does not alarm me. Besides, not one of our ills is incurable, and we have within us forces and qualities which will facilitate a complete cure. We have not many friends, but our country must be very fine since so many envy it, and their policy consists in discrediting us in order to make an easy prey of us."

After a minute's silence he asked:

"Were you at the Berlin Congress?"

"Yes, Your Majesty; and if the Sultan will allow me to say so, Turkey on that occasion made one of her

greatest mistakes. When she ought to have been represented by her most important and most imposing personages, she was represented by men who no doubt were very devoted and well-intentioned but who had no authority, who trembled before Prince Bismarck, and upon whom he could impose silence by a mere glance. I do not know why this mistake was made, but in Berlin every one was struck by it, and it was generally thought that the Turkish Government had sent plenipotentiaries of foreign origin so that the eventual consequences of the Berlin Treaty should not fall upon the Mussulmans."

"Yes, you are right; I have greatly regretted what you wisely call a mistake, and I still regret it. I understood it when I saw that Greeks had been admitted to the Congress who had no right to be there, and when I saw that, in the face of their admission, my plenipotentiaries did not protest and leave the meeting. It is when nations have been conquered that it is their duty not to cheapen their pride. But we were in a painful situation, the enemy was at our gates, and we did not reckon much on the equity of Europe, for our friends there were not numerous. We had very few men who cared to go to Berlin to affront the decisions of this Congress, and to give their signatures to the treaty of spoliation which we foresaw. Sacrifices were imposed upon me then from which I am still suffering. Do you imagine that Bulgaria and Thessaly are any happier at present than they were before their separation? But no matter about that; this explains the mistake we made—it does not excuse it."

"Your Majesty said that you did not count much on the equity of Europe; but neither England nor France

have abandoned the defense of Turkey, and Your Majesty cannot reproach them with that."

"Yes; I have never reckoned them among my enemies. We have always sought their friendship, and in spite of all that has been done we have never failed to recognise the necessity of it. Unfortunately, of late clouds have arisen between us; but I hope that these clouds, and particularly the two chief somber points, will be dissipated by a friendly understanding."

"Your Majesty is alluding to Egypt and to Tunis?"

"Yes. I saw with satisfaction that quite recently the English Government seemed disposed to evacuate. Do you think that England will soon decide to carry this into effect?"

"I think, Sire, that in England they are contemplating political evacuation; but, although every one is convinced that England neither proposes annexation nor an indefinite occupation, one must take into consideration the political situation of that country. There is in England a force which it is difficult to appreciate elsewhere, and which is called public opinion. When England saw herself obliged to go alone to Egypt, it was necessary to stimulate this force in order to make it consent to a costly and dangerous expedition, and at present it will be necessary to allow the English Cabinet, which depends on the public opinion of the country, sufficient time to influence it and to make it admit that the occasion has come for evacuating Egypt. But, apart from these two points, Egypt and Tunis, France and England can have no reservation at present with regard to Turkey, and if Turkey, like all nations which are suffering, had not become more dis-

trustful than in her better days, she would understand that she can from henceforth trust herself without reserve to the friendship of these two nations."

"Yes; but in the meantime they have not hesitated to violate my rights. It was a great trouble to me, as I value their friendship very highly, and I fancy that mine is not to be despised by either of them. In so many different points we come into contact with each other, and a nation should take this seriously into account. Then, too, friendship between nations is not manifested by diplomatic actions only; it is shown also by the equitable way in which it judges a country. My country is judged superficially, and that is the reason it is calumniated. I value the opinion of Europe, and I wish that credence were not given there to those who amuse themselves with spreading satirical reports about us. Your words will be heard—so tell them and prove to them that after observing our country in an impartial manner one has a better opinion of it. I am told that you have seen a great many people here, and, as you must be in the habit of observing, will you tell me whether you have drawn any inferences from what you have seen?"

"If Your Majesty will allow me to speak frankly, and I can scarcely do otherwise, as if I did I might be obliged to write to-morrow the contrary of what I said to-day, my opinion is this: I believe that every evil from which your country is suffering could be remedied, and easily remedied. But there are two difficulties: the first is, that all depends on only the will of Your Majesty, and consequently Your Majesty would have to give up to a certain degree this absolute will. The second

difficulty is, that if Your Majesty decided to do this, those whom Your Majesty commands would have to agree to this partial and progressive abdication. Now, the curious part is, that those who depend on the absolute will of Your Majesty will probably be the first to resist a change which would prevent them from screening their own faults under the cover of the absolute orders of their Sovereign. But if once this were obtained, if Your Majesty could succeed in creating an administration, with the capabilities and the energy necessary for carrying out the reforms decided upon, it would be an immense step toward the improvement of Turkey. Your Majesty holds in your hand all liberty, because you alone can will everything. If Your Majesty would open your hand, little by little, setting this liberty gradually free, in proportion as the country is capable of accepting and of using it, Turkey would rapidly rise from her present position.

"The consolidation of the floating debt, the suppression of the *havales*, officials held responsible for what they do, roads opened up through the country, courts of justice established and public instruction always encouraged—these are the reforms which would soon bear fruit; but, as I said before, Your Majesty must root out that spirit of absolute submission which causes every official to tolerate the continuation of abuses for which he is not responsible."

"I understand perfectly well what you have just said," answered the Sultan. "I am glad to find that you do not share the opinion of those who believe that this country cannot recover. As to what you say with regard to myself, I am of your opinion, and I have quite decided

to gradually open my hand. The difficulty is to know just how far to go. When it was seen that this country could not support a constitution and a parliament that was not the entire representation of the country but only a part of the country, people came to me and began to talk about responsibilities. It was another way of reorganising a constitution. I refused this. Those who talked about responsibilities only saw in this a means of substituting their will for mine at the expense of others, and the consequence would have been that the great mass of the country would only have changed from the will of one to that of another. I am now trying, as you have just said, to prepare this country for the more independent part it has to play, and I have already modified many things, which are not remarked abroad, but which are, however, producing a good effect at home."

Then returning obstinately to his first idea, he asked:

"Do you think that the English will soon consent to evacuate Egypt?"

"I have already had the honour of replying to Your Majesty on this subject," I said. "But I will take the liberty of remarking that England is in Egypt against her will. When she asked Your Majesty to go with her to Egypt, influenced as she was by that secret dread which takes possession of all who are laying their hand on no matter what Ottoman territory, she was absolutely sincere. It was a great and terrible mistake of Turkey to refuse to accompany England, thus obliging her to go alone, which meant to remain there. History will consider, with equal astonishment, this proposal of England and Turkey's refusal. The only consolation

of Turkey, if indeed that can be any consolation, is that in this question France was no wiser than she was."

I knew perfectly well that I had just attacked the Sultan direct. Not only had Abdul-Hamid been the principal author of Turkey's refusal, but he had refused to listen to the most trustworthy counsel; and for fear of displeasing the Mussulmans, a fear which was chimerical, far-fetched and not at all justified, Abdul-Hamid missed an opportunity, perhaps unique, of changing the character of the Egyptian occupation and of maintaining an uncontested supremacy over the Delta of the Nile.

I, therefore, awaited his reply with some impatience. I thought, or rather I feared, that he would bring forward some of those subtle arguments which the organs of the Ottoman press have endeavoured to circulate in order to attenuate the effect of the refusal of the Porte. But Abdul-Hamid, I repeat and I proclaim it, is a man of superior mind, who, when he is struck by sound reasoning is perhaps annoyed, but at the same time is influenced by it. As he had no good arguments to offer, and he would not stoop to poor ones, he did not reply, but changed the subject. This was, as any one can see, a tacit approval of what I had just said, and I learned, later on, that it was to be interpreted in this way.

"When are you leaving?" he asked.

"To-morrow, Your Majesty."

"So soon! I am sorry you are not staying longer. But I should like you to bear in mind that, if you write to me, either about things that have happened or about current topics, I will answer you. If, for State reasons, I am unable to, I will tell you plainly that I cannot do so. Take note, too, that if ever you come again to Constanti-

nople, you must come the very day of your arrival to see me. You have only to say that it was my wish that you should come, that it was by my order you asked to see me, and I promise you that I will receive you. And, as I am now talking to some one who understands the gravity of the mission confided to the journalist who endeavours to find out the truth and to publish it, remember that I do not wish to suppress existing liberties, but to give new liberties; that I do not wish to increase the financial troubles of my empire, but to remedy them; and that I do not wish to suppress justice, but to establish and consolidate it. Remember that this nation, which bears in itself those causes of its weakness, also contains the elements of great strength, and that I wish to cure the former and make use of the latter."

Abdul-Hamid rose, and at this moment there was an expression in his eyes which showed that he was deeply moved. I quite understood that he felt sincerely what he had just been saying to me, but that at the same time he saw rising up before him all the obstacles which stood between his plans and their realisation. He had just been pleading, as it were, to a European journalist, the cause of his race and of his people, and a struggle was perhaps going on within him between the duty of the monarch and the pride of the Calif. It did not last long, though. Abdul-Hamid drew himself up, went a few steps with me, and then, taking my hand in his, held it a few minutes while he spoke.

"His Majesty thanks you for your visit, which he will remember with pleasure," interpreted Raghib Bey, "and he begs you to accept this in memory of this conversation."

He handed me a book containing the insignia of the second order of the Medjidie, just as I had bowed to Abdul-Hamid for the second time at the door of the room in which he had received me.

I found my friends where I had left them. They were rather surprised at my long absence. I explained to them what had happened, and we decided to go to Osman-Bey, the First Chamberlain, and present my thanks according to the custom of the country.

Osman-Bey, one of the most enlightened Turks, who has established and endowed the largest existing printing works in the Ottoman Empire, received me with the affability peculiar to Turks of the educated class, and, after offering us coffee, called one of his officials, who appeared to be accustomed to this duty, to fasten on the right side of my coat and to place around my neck, in spite of my tourist's costume, the insignia of my new dignity, so that, as Osman-Bey said, according to the prescribed formula, "the will of the Sultan may be accomplished."

I then left the Yildiz-Kiosque with my friends. The numerous Turks whom we met saluted me respectfully without appearing astonished at my accouterments, which made me feel somewhat embarrassed.

The guards of the palace shouldered arms, and as I passed through the last gateway I perceived a crowd of persons looking at me. They understood that I had just had an interview with the Sultan. But I could not refrain from saying to myself:

"I only hope that no caricaturist will catch sight of me!"

CHAPTER XIV

Exile of the French Princes

There is no régime and no government which at some time or another does not make a mistake, and I believe that a grave error was committed by the French Republic when, in May, 1886, it decided to expel from the country the Princes belonging to the dynasties which had reigned over France; the Count de Paris and his son, the Duke d'Orléans, on the one side, and Prince Jerome Napoleon and his son, Prince Victor Napoleon, on the other. I think it was a mistake because, in the first place, when a democratic government inscribes on the walls of its public buildings the great word "Liberty," its desire should be to have liberty exist not only for, but also against, itself; in the second place, because exile is a barbarous punishment which ought to disappear from the customs of contemporary civilisation; and lastly, because, by exiling the Princes, to whom she had hitherto shown hospitality, the French Republic thereby gave them the right to conspire against her. She could no longer appeal to their sentiments of honour to respect the order of established things; she placed them in the best position that claimants to the throne could wish—that of being able to conspire at their ease.

Without paradox, I say that if I were the government, it seems to me that for my own personal tranquillity, I

should allow myself the luxury of having in my country a pretender as a hostage.

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Now, the Count de Paris, in particular, the heir to the throne of Louis Philippe, could not be considered as a very dangerous pretender. Tall and strong, with a frank, placid sort of face, intelligent, loyal but not bright eyes, a firm-looking mouth, which had a kind but not melancholy expression, sturdy on his legs, but with a slight stoop, his shoulders square but sloping, his physical appearance was, on the whole, more that of a bourgeois than of a candidate for the crown.

He delighted in work of a long and serious nature, and loved social problems the solutions of which are liable to demand a lifetime.

It was with veritable enthusiasm that he penned a voluminous work on the American Civil War, and, on the 21st of July, 1874, he wrote me a long letter on that subject from which I quote the following characteristic passage:

"I have," he said, "found great satisfaction, in the midst of my trials during the last few years, in accomplishing this work, which has been considerable, and in placing on the scene, after conscientious researches for historical truth, actors who are most of them known to me personally. I have found in this an occupation during my exile, something to refresh my mind at critical moments. It was not for the sake of bringing back my vanished illusions, nor with the idea of turning my thoughts from the present to the past, that I have continued this work, which I commenced a long time ago.

What illusions could I have lost? My confidence in the future, my conviction that my country will recover morally, outlive in my mind all the vicissitudes it has experienced. And if my thoughts turn often toward America, it is in order to recall to memory the crisis which I witnessed, the discouragement and trouble which in those difficult times seemed to have taken possession of all hearts, the gloomy predictions which I heard on all sides, and to say to myself that, after all, the day came when those who had reasoned calmly saw their patriotic confidence justified in a most brilliant manner."

It seems to me that the whole character of the Count de Paris was reflected in that letter. He was waiting without eagerness or regret for the hour that Providence should decree for him to ascend the throne. He had very few illusions and a kind of vague presentiment that that hour would never arrive for him. He was an enemy, not only of violent means, but even of all noise and agitation. It seemed as though he were destined to end his days peacefully.

This was the precise moment chosen by the Republic to place round the forehead of this "model pretender" the halo of exile.

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As soon as I heard that the bill for the expulsion of the French Princes had been introduced into the Chamber of Deputies, I went to the Château d'Eu in Normandy, where the Count de Paris and all his family were then residing.

I had already had the honour of seeing the heir to

129. Faubourg St Honore
Paris

July 4th 1874

Dear Sir

The work which I am engaged in will fill at least seven volumes and embrace the four years of the Civil war. The two volumes which are to come out on Wednesday comprise the preliminaries and the first year of the War. The Chapter which I shall be able to send to in order to put the whole chapter in your hands, but as that chapter has more than fifty pages it is not a thing which is to be telegraphed and although I send the whole chapter for your own discretion, I expect that you shall select only the most striking parts for the Times, according to your judgment. Believe me dear Sir

Yours truly

Louis d'Orléans

FACSIMILE OF PART OF LETTER FROM THE COMTE DE PARIS, THE FRENCH PRETENDER, TO M. DE BLOWITZ
About the book which Comte de Paris was writing on the American Civil War

the throne of Louis-Philippe several times, and we had kept up a rather lengthy correspondence with each other. As soon as I asked for an audience, he accorded it willingly. He received me in his library in the midst of his books and of the telegrams of sympathy which were pouring in upon his table from all parts of France.

I assured him that I had not come for an interview, but to express to him how grieved I was personally at the thought of the terrible exile with which he was threatened.

"Oh!" he answered, "in this circumstance, as in so many others, there is no need for me to ask you to keep our meeting secret. When I heard at Talevera that the bill of expulsion had been laid before the Chamber, it was not of myself that I first thought, nor yet of my family. I thought of my country, and I felt a great sadness come over me at the idea that, after a hundred years of struggle and discord, the era of proscription had not yet closed, and that the children of France should be seen wandering about in a foreign land without any home."

"And where do you think of going, monseigneur," I asked, "if, as seems probable, the bill should pass as regards you and the Duke d'Orléans?"

"I have not yet definitely decided, but I think very seriously of going to England. I have received from that country so many and such inviting proofs of general sympathy, and I have such touching letters from persons that I do not even know, that at present it will be difficult for me to seek refuge elsewhere. I cannot go to Germany; Austria would be too far away from our beloved France; and I know only too well, from a certain experience that

I have not yet had time to forget, that London is the centre of information—so that I am very much drawn toward it.

"I thought of Switzerland, but I can go there later on, for I do not intend to stay definitely in any fixed place. I have no intention of buying a house or of settling down for good. Formerly, when in exile, I chose a fixed residence, because circumstances were then different. I was not at that time the uncontested head of the House of France, so that I could then wait, without failing in any duty, for events to take place. At present it is not the same thing, and I do not give up hope of seeing my country again, for, even under its present form, I cannot believe that this persecution will continue and that France will not reopen her doors to all her children.

"That is why I do not wish to settle down definitely. I shall go away and we shall try to imagine that we are travelling; we shall change our abode without changing our hopes."

"Is it true, monseigneur, that a General said to you at the reception on the 15th of May, 'Monseigneur, you have not only soldiers, but an army?'"

"Such a remark was never made to me. Besides, there were on the occasion, only two Generals present, both of whom were retired officers, and neither of them had any conversation with me—neither of them uttered the phrase you mention. A great many reports were spread on that occasion, and many pretexts were sought for. I was told that the Premier had taken exception to my having invited some Ambassadors. I could not have advised him of the fact, for that would have been giving

to my invitations a political character they did not have. I did not invite the diplomatic corps; I simply invited to a family party some diplomats who were my personal friends.

"I had known Lord Lyons, for instance, for twenty-five years and had always been on friendly terms with him. It would have been giving a political character to my invitations if I had excluded Lord Lyons because he was the Ambassador of England. I have also been blamed for certain newspaper articles. That merely shows how short of arguments some people were. I neither knew of nor yet did I inspire these articles, otherwise I should have said to their authors, as I have said to all my friends: 'Do not let any one misrepresent the character of this *fête*. I am the father of a family inviting his friends, and this little reunion has not been prompted by any other idea.'"

"Monseigneur," I said, "as it is probable the bill will be passed by which you alone and the Duke d'Orléans will be exiled, and the other Princes will be allowed to remain in a more or less tolerable position—will these Princes follow you?"

"I have just communicated to my brother my formal desire that he should remain, since he has a right to do so. I particularly wish him to stay here where I can no longer reside; I particularly desire that he should live in the land from which I am exiled. I have already told you I do not intend to take up any fixed abode.

"I cannot expect that he should travel about with me, and make his home in the places where I stay according to circumstances or according to my preferences. It will be a consolation to me to feel that he is here, and I know too well his affection for me not to be compelled to act

with authority in order to insist on his staying in France. A great deal has been said about the Duke d'Aumale. When he learned the way in which his defense had been taken in order to save him from exile he was very bitter. He came at once to see me and he made no secret of his visit.

"It was the best and, indeed, the only way to reply to those who wished to prove that they were right in insisting that he should be allowed to remain in France. I will say of him what I said about the Duke de Chartres: I cannot compel him to go wandering about. He has not, as I have, the duties of the exceptional situation which this law demands of me; it treats me in such a distinctly exclusive manner that if I had adopted it myself it would have been imputed to me as a crime. By separating me from the rest of my family, they qualify me in a more ostensible way than I should ever have done, and if my pride were greater than my love of my country I should be now delighted. As to the other Princes, they have never troubled about politics, but have remained content with serving their fatherland. It is only just, therefore, that they should be held blameless of any crime, and it would be strange if I were to show myself more exacting toward them than are our adversaries."

"People say, monseigneur, that you wanted to wait until you were expelled by force instead of obeying a simple order."

"They do not know me well who say that. I can see only two ways of proceeding. Three centuries ago a Prince in my situation would have killed any one who had come with such an order, and would have rushed

off to the country with his comrades to start a civil war. But that is neither in accordance with my character nor with our times. I shall obey the law. I owe that to my friends and I owe it to my adversaries. I owe it to my country, too, for it is being taught to scorn the law. I shall depart in obedience to the law, of which I shall be duly informed."

"Shall you keep the day of your departure a secret, monseigneur?"

"No; certainly not. Unless I am obliged to act differently, I shall start by daylight, and I know my friends well enough to be sure that when I take leave of them they will all act in a dignified way, as becomes the friends of an exiled family dear to them. I shall be glad to shake hands with those who come to see me off, but when the moment arrives, it is for consolation that I shall look rather than for noisy demonstrations."

I have taken care to reproduce the Count's exact words; in the first place, because they do him honour, and in the second place, because he adhered to them scrupulously.

When, on the 22nd of June, 1886, at ten o'clock in the evening, and in the same library where he had spoken to me of his plans when in exile, the Count de Paris received the decisive telegram announcing that by a majority of thirty-seven votes the Senate had ratified the decision of the Chamber of Deputies and voted his exile, he showed no sign of anger or revolt.

He went down into the large *salon*, where all the Princes of France were anxiously awaiting him, and, handing the telegram to the Duke d'Aumale, he simply remarked:

"The bill is adopted in its entirety by a majority of thirty-seven votes. We start the day after to-morrow."

And on the second day, at two o'clock in the afternoon, the piers being black with people, an English boat, which had hoisted on its mainmast the tricoloured flag, sailed slowly away from the Treport quay.

I can still see that scene. The sun was shining brilliantly and the deck of the boat was covered with flowers. On the bridge stood a man, bareheaded, his handkerchief in his hand, his head bent slightly sideways over his shoulder. His figure, which usually had a slight stoop, was now erect, making him look taller. It was the Count de Paris leaving for England—an exile.

For a long time he remained thus standing on the bridge, gazing at the sunny shores of France from which he had just been torn away; and it seemed as though his eyes wanted to take in every bend of the coast in order to engrave it forever on his memory. Perhaps, since he had the conviction that he would never reign over this country, had he also at that solemn hour a presentiment that in all his life he would never again see the land of France?

CHAPTER XV

San Remo

I doubt if in modern times, or perhaps even in the past, a greater or more impressive, more effectingly tragic episode has ever taken place than that of which the marvellous region of the Côte d'Azur, by the shore of the eternally blue Mediterranean, was the scene during the winter of 1887–88.

On the frontier which separates France and Italy, in the delicious little town of San Remo, among the palms and the orange trees in blossom, there, in the sunlight and the fragrance which bathed the white city, a man whom suffering had vanquished was slowly dying. He was the son of the old Emperor William I. and son-in-law of Queen Victoria. I refer to the Crown Prince, Frederick William.

The whole world had its eyes fixed on this town and on this man. With anxious curiosity everybody was watching the frightful struggle in progress there, the object of which was to prolong the life of the doomed heir to a throne. Would he live long enough to become Emperor? Would he have the strength to traverse the little space separating him from one of the greatest thrones on earth? Who would be the first to die, the old Emperor, enfeebled by age, or his son, enfeebled by sickness? Who would be Emperor, the Crown Prince Frederick or the young man, ardent, impetuous and

impatient, known as Prince William? All the world over these were the questions that people were asking themselves and to which they were awaiting a reply.

San Remo had, one might almost say, been taken by storm by reporters from every country immediately after the arrival of the Crown Prince there. Opposite his villa was a hotel, the Hotel de la Méditerranée. People almost came to blows in order to secure a front room there. Certain American papers had sent out young ladies as reporters, relying on their sex for procuring them certain privileges. These ladies from morning to night kept levelling their photographic apparatus at the villa, the garden, and more especially at the balcony on which, in the afternoon, Frederick William was wont to try to soothe his suffering as he listened to the somewhat distant murmur of the sea. To protect him against this inquisitorial examination, a high wall of verdure had been constructed, and on the balcony a screen had been placed. But this was all so much time and trouble thrown away. The reporters, men and women alike, ascended to the roof of the hotel, and from that vantage point, plunging their vision beyond both screen and wall of verdure, photographed and gazed and listened to their hearts' content.

Yet they obtained little enough. No one, at all events, had the slightest inkling of what was taking place in the interior of the villa, whither no outsider had been allowed to penetrate. The occupants, orderly officers, doctors, maids of honour, servants, were all extremely discreet. Not the slighest echo escaped by the windows; not a morsel of gossip issued by the door. Reporters and journalists remained in an ignorance anything but blissful,

and telegraphed nothing of importance. As one of them, a Frenchman, remarked:

"So little is known as to what is going on around the Crown Prince that it is impossible even to exaggerate or to give play to one's imagination."

I myself, happening to be at Monte Carlo, had gone over to San Remo, and had striven to penetrate a little the mystery, to raise a corner of the veil, to bring back a few echoes of the tragedy which was evidently taking place—which I felt certain was going on behind the walls of verdure. But I had completely failed, and had left San Remo disappointed, irritated, but haunted by the image of this villa, picturesquely suspended in its garden of verdure, but tantalisingly mute and as enigmatic as a sphinx.

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One morning, however, in the first week of March, 1888, I found among my correspondence a letter with a mauve envelope.

I recall vividly even now its very form and colour. The letter was in a large and fine feminine handwriting. It contained only four lines, as follows:

"If you wish to know all about the tragedy of San Remo, why do you not try to find Madame Zirio?"

More than once during my long and adventurous existence I have received just such mysterious and anonymous suggestions. They were not always written on mauve letter-paper, nor did they always emanate from a feminine hand. According to my humour at the time, or to the presentiment I felt, or to the

sensations aroused in me, I either flung them into the waste-paper basket or religiously heeded their contents. And when I adopted the latter resolution I never had cause to regret it.

I remembered quite well the name of Madame Zirio, whom I had met once in the south of France. She was a tall, handsome woman, with bright, honest eyes, a delicate yet energetic mouth, and brilliant, black hair, in which, like the women of Catalonia, she often wore a large fantastic comb. Her whole bearing, thanks to her Marseilles extraction, betrayed the suppleness of the Phocians and the wavy motion of the Greeks. She was married to an Italian, M. Baptiste Zirio, who was always ill, and I was unable to make out what possible connection there could be between her and the dying heir of the German Empire. Yet I felt a presentiment bidding me, "Go!"—and I went. The same evening I packed my bag and boarded the Mediterranean Express for San Remo.

When there, I discovered without difficulty the little house occupied by Madame Zirio. I rang the doorbell and was ushered in. It was only after I found myself seated in this lady's drawing-room that the humour of the situation struck me, and that I began to wonder how I should explain my position to my hostess.

I concluded that the simplest means were the best, and when Madame Zirio appeared and we had exchanged compliments I showed her the mauve letter.

She blushed a little and then turned pale.

"It is really strange," she said. "I, too, received a letter yesterday almost identical with this one. The handwriting was very much like this and the colour of the paper was the same. Mine also contained four lines:

'If you receive the visit of a celebrated journalist, why not tell him the truth about the tragedy of San Remo?' "

The coincidence was, to say the least, odd. I hastened to add that the mysterious person who had sent these two letters certainly knew what she was about, for Madame Zirio, whose name had hitherto been pronounced by no one in the world, whose very existence was unsuspected by any journalist, was, in reality, the proprietor of the white villa occupied by the Crown Prince Frederick. It was she who had supervised all the preparations and who, having only five weeks allotted her, had engaged and trained the admirably discreet corps of attendants, from whom no one at San Remo had been able to extract the slightest information. It was she who had daily access to the interior of the princely habitation and who was consulted hourly, by night as well as by day, as to what had to be done; and it was she to whom Prince William had paid a visit during his forty-eight hours' stay at San Remo, and to whom, in token of his gratitude and friendship, he had even given his photograph with a dedication.

Madame Zirio had herself arranged the apartments. The ground floor was used as a general drawing-room and dining-room The first floor was occupied by the Crown Prince and his wife. A large bedroom, with two small beds exactly alike, communicated by a large dressing-room and by a small corridor with the apartments of the Maid of Honour, Countess of Brühl.

On the second floor were the apartments of the Princesses, Princess Victoria, who was engaged to Prince Alexander of Battenberg, and who, displaying her hands, which

were interminably long, said with a laugh, in French, "*Moi j'ai des Hohenzollerns les mains, les pieds et les oreilles, c'est énorme,*" and Princess Sophie, who on the eve of her return to Berlin said, "I am glad to leave, for I was almost forgetting here that I am a royal Princess."

The Crown Prince was so delighted with the house when he first entered it that, after almost joyfully raising his cap and throwing aside his long, brown ulster, he exclaimed to Madame Zirio: "I am touched by the attentive way in which everything has been arranged for our stay here. One feels that it is the eye of a woman, and the eye of a woman of this lovely coast, which has watched over everything for us."

And seated there in Madame Zirio's drawing-room, only a few steps from the white villa and near the blue sea, my hostess, obeying the mysterious letter on the mauve paper, related to me what was called "The Tragedy of San Remo."

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It was indeed a veritable tragedy, and behind the peaceful walls of the sunlit house there were some terrible struggles and certain frightful rivalries. The sick man had brought with him German doctors, among whom was Professor Bergmann, and English doctors, the most prominent of the number being Sir Morell Mackenzie; and between these doctors the quarrels were almost dramatic in their intensity. At the outset the Germans held their peace, relatively speaking; but later on they expressed their opinions of Sir Morell Mackenzie with a brutal want of self-control, even going so far as to say that he furnished information to the press, and that on this information he speculated on the Bourse. The

servants and attendants were all either German or English and reflected the dissensions of the doctors. Count von Seckendorff, who had taken up his abode in a dark room, into which the sun never penetrated, on the ground floor, was the inflexible partisan of the royal Princess, while Count Radolinski sided with the Germans.

Between the two parties there was not one single moment of truce. The struggle was somber and silent, but it was visible on any and every occasion. The two camps attacked and dishonoured each other. When the moment arrived to perform the operation of tracheotomy, the wretched battle continued even around the tube which was to prolong the agony of Frederick III. The German doctors wanted a German tube; the English doctors an English one. Finally, under the direction of the famous American doctor, Thomas Evans, a goldsmith constructed the model which was adopted.

On the 9th of November, 1887, at 6:30 P. M., another element of tragedy heightened the dramatic character of the situation. Prince William of Prussia arrived at San Remo. The local authorities, Prince Henry, his brother, and the aides-de-camp awaited him. With his characteristic impulsiveness, Prince Henry rushed forward to throw himself into his brother's arms. Prince William stopped him with a haughtiness that did not escape observation. His face was grave and he looked sedate and hierarchic. The smiles vanished from the lips of the onlookers and the veil of sadness seemed still heavier.

During his visit, which lasted forty-eight hours, Prince William saw very little of his father, if, indeed, he saw him at all. But he had a long talk with the German

doctors, displaying toward their English colleagues either disdain or utter indifference.

"My mother," he said, "is really very shortsighted in substituting English for German science. Bismarck, who never makes a mistake, considers German science superior to all other."

He went with his brother and sisters on a few short sea trips, which was his way of spending the afternoon, and appeared quite gay, as though he had nothing whatever to worry him.

"You see," he said, "it is better to have only boys, for a girl gives much more trouble and is a great deal more expensive. One must have a governess for her, a maid of honour and quite a complicated household, whereas boys can be dressed all alike in uniform. One piece of stuff serves for them all. My boys are all dressed as gunners, even the youngest, who is only eighteen months, and who is corporal. On his last birthday I took command of his company and marched it past the Emperor William. It was the last time he laughed, and he laughed till the tears came trickling down his cheeks, for he saw the little corporal marching past, straight and upright, turning his head at the word of command."

On the day following his arrival Prince William announced his departure.

"Ah, so much the better!" said Madame Zirio, who chanced to be there. "Then the Crown Prince is improving and the last consultation was reassuring?"

"Oh, no!" replied Prince William; "on the contrary, my father, as was foreseen when I left Berlin, is despaired of. He is suffering, without the slightest doubt, from

cancer. It is a matter of only a certain number of days, perhaps weeks. I am going, because there is no longer anything to hope for. My grandfather is much weaker. The Czar is coming, and my presence at Berlin is indispensable. I think I shall still have time to return here."

There were a few moments of silence, and then Madame Zirio exclaimed, laughing:

"Will you allow me to say, '*Au revoir*, future Emperor?' "

"Willingly," replied the Prince, and he then took his leave.

The following day he left San Remo for Berlin. He was absolutely sure that his father's case was hopeless, and his conviction was strengthened by the verdict of those doctors in whom alone he had faith. In his opinion, Morell Mackenzie was an ignoramus whose assertions were not worth discussing in presence of the infallible verdict of the German faculties.

On the 7th of February—just four weeks before I arrived at San Remo—at 11 A. M., the Crown Prince and his wife were about to go for a drive on the Corniche in an open carriage. Doctor Mackenzie and Doctor Bramann, Doctor Bergmann's assistant, were at the door of the villa. Just as the driver was about to start the horses, who were growing impatient, a slight breeze sprang up on the coast. Mackenzie, walking toward Bramann, made a sign to the driver, who pulled back his team.

The Prince, with a sad look in his eyes, turned his head toward the doctors.

"This promenade is imprudent," said Mackenzie to Bramann. "The respiration is becoming difficult. Two

hours hence it may perhaps be too late, and Bergmann will not be here for two days. We must come to a decision."

"I shall never have the courage to assume the responsibility of this operation," replied Doctor Bramann.

The Prince, who was watching them both, saw that Bramann was growing pale.

"At all events," replied Mackenzie, "before allowing him to go out we must make a fresh examination."

He signed affectionately to the future Emperor, inviting him to get out of the carriage, and the Crown Prince flung off the furs that covered his knees, and, turning toward the Princess as if to ask her pardon for having spoiled her drive, he stepped down and entered the house.

The doctors then examined the throat once more.

"I will wait an hour." said Doctor Mackenzie. "If there is no change, you must operate."

An iron bedstead was sent for, the head-rail of which was broken for the convenience of the doctors. The bed was placed in the middle of the room with a red cushion on the pillows.

At one o'clock there was a fresh examination.

Doctor Mackenzie, after a rapid glance, merely turned to Doctor Bramann and said:

"Are you ready?"

"Yes," was the latter's reply.

The Prince lay down on the little iron bed. He was quite calm.

"Is chloroform indispensable?" he asked.

"Yes, Prince," replied the Doctors.

The anesthetic then began its work and Bramann took off his coat. The operation was commenced.

Two hours later it was over and the Crown Princess Frederick entered the apartment of her maid of honour, the Countess of Brühl, exclaiming with sobs:

"Fritz has the tube in his throat."

. . . . . .

All this, I need hardly say, is history, and even now as I write these lines I can recall vividly the scene at San Remo, when Madame Zirio related to me, as the shadows fell, the whole story of this tragedy in which she herself had been so absorbed a spectator.

This interview, as I have said, occurred on the 8th of March, 1888. As I sat there drinking in every word that fell from the lips fo my hostess, and fixing them faithfully in my memory, something more intensely dramatic than all that precedes took place.

The drawing-room door suddenly burst open and a servant rushed in, completely out of breath:

"Madame, madame!" she exclaimed, "you don't know the news?"

"No. What is it?"

"It has just come from the White Villa. The old Emperor has just died at Berlin."

A moment later we were on our way to the White Villa.

I shall never forget this historical scene, one of the most affecting I have ever witnessed.

In the Crown Prince's garden a pall of sorrow seemed to hang like an atmosphere. Officers, major-domos, sentinels and servants were hurrying hither and thither in strange confusion. The large drawing-room on the

ground floor was brilliantly lighted, and through the windows we could see everything that was going on within.

The members of the household had all assembled there and were standing in a circle. The conversation was in undertones. All seemed to feel the strangeness, the really extraordinary position of this sudden elevation of the Prince, whose death had already been discounted and deplored.

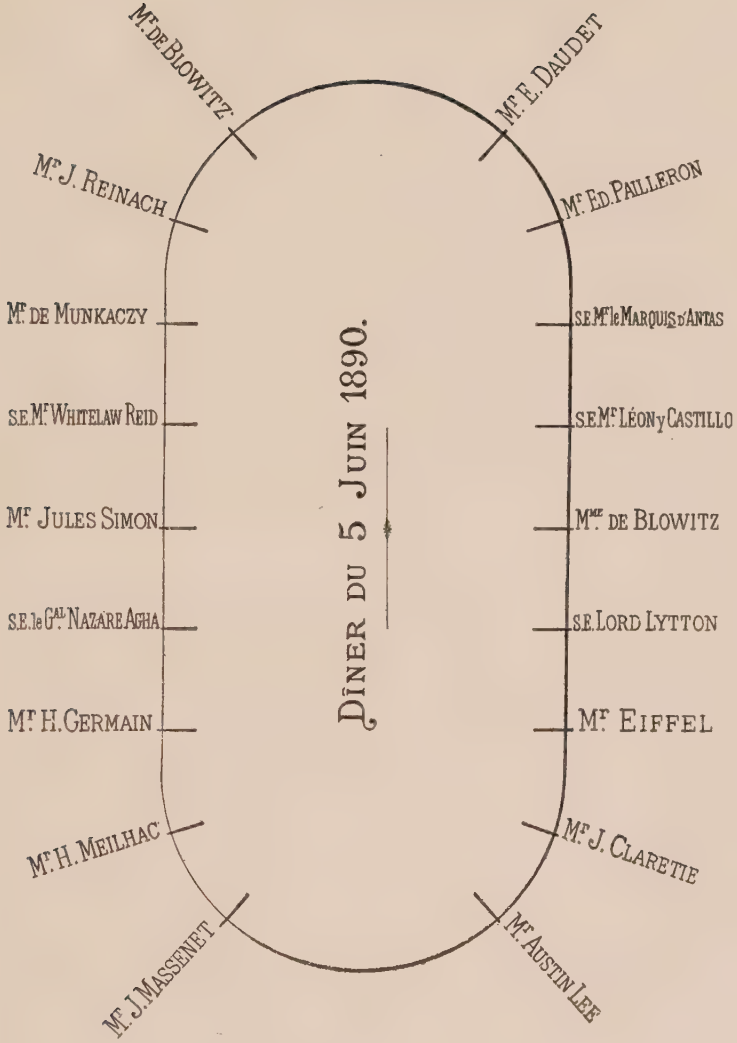
Suddenly the door was opened and the "Emperor" appeared.

He had become handsome again as in the radiant days of his youth. His beard, with a few silver streaks, glowed in the brilliant light of the chandelier. Tall and well built, he dominated the entire company. His blue eyes were slightly misty. His delicate complexion, now heightened with a little colour, seemed to show the real tranquillity which had taken possession of his soul, and his mouth, with the red lips, had now that fascinating smile which characterised him.

With a firm step he walked straight to a small table in the middle of the drawing-room and wrote—for the tube prevented him from speaking—a few lines, which he signed. An officer read the paper aloud. It was the announcement of the death of the Emperor William I. and of his own accession as Frederick III.

The Emperor then walked toward the Empress, made a long and reverent bow, paying full homage to his wife's valiant courage, and with a grave and tender gesture passed round her neck the ribbon of the Black Eagle.

The Empress, with tears in her eyes, threw herself into the arms of Frederick III., and as they embraced they



DINNER GIVEN BY M. DE BLOWITZ, SHOWING THE GUESTS

gave full vent at last to their sobs, which they had so long and so heroically restrained.

All then present marched past the new Emperor. Doctor Morell Mackenzie, who had performed the operation, stopped somewhat longer than the others. Frederick III. had seized his two hands, clasping them warmly. At a small table the Emperor wrote for him a few words of gratitude:

"I thank you for having made me live long enough to recompense the valiant courage of my wife."

After this brief scene everybody left the drawing-room. The Emperor ascended with the Empress to his apartments on the first floor. The lights gradually went out. Once more the White Villa was plunged in shadow and silence.

. . . . . .

The next day I left San Remo for Paris. I have never since seen Madame Zirio, and I cannot say whether she has kept the mysterious mauve letter. Nor have I any idea even now as to the author of its strange contents.

During my journalistic career I have been aided by many a chance; I have met with many extraordinary incidents, but no chance, no incident has appeared to me more marvellous than that which led me to San Remo to witness the final scenes of that historic tragedy which had aroused the passionate interest of the whole world.

And I felt it my duty in these, my memoirs, to devote to this episode an entire chapter, for it will show the remarkable part which the inscrutable goddess called Destiny plays in the career of a journalist.

CHAPTER XVI

How Bismarck Retired

This chapter might also be entitled, "Of the difficulties experienced by a journalist who wishes to maintain cordial relations with a diplomatist."

And I write it, not only for the sake of retracing an episode of contemporary history with which I was connected, but also to show the strange obstacles, the unexpected contradictions, and the unheard-of difficulties that a journalist must face in order to keep the public well-posted on the great events that are happening in the world.

In 1892 Germany was represented in Paris by an Ambassador who was first Count, and then Prince Münster.

Count Münster was one of the most striking types of a German I have ever met. He was like a straight, healthy tree brought from one of the German forests, and the continual contact with the diplomatic world had only softened very slightly the ruggedness of his bark. He had that frigid and somewhat monotonous slowness of Germans who are given to reflection. He had neither that feminine gracefulness so frequently found in diplomatists, nor yet that quick understanding with which women are usually credited. His somewhat imposing physical heaviness gave one the exact idea of his moral nature, and this curious and rare con-

cordance of the exterior and the interior was almost perfect in his case.

Count Münster was Ambassador at Paris at a very difficult period. The relations between the two countries were far from being then what they have since become. There was great tension between Paris and Berlin, or, to speak more exactly, between the French nation and the German nation. There were frequent incidents springing up, either on the frontier or in the very heart of the capital, which rendered the task of the diplomatist and the Governments of both countries extremely arduous.

Rumours of war were sometimes heard in the distance. In addition to this, the mission of Count Münster was rendered all the more complex from the fact that, in Germany, the most serious and disquieting quarrels were beginning to take place between the Emperor, William II., and his formidable Chancellor, Prince Bismarck. There were rumours of resignation in the air, and German diplomatists abroad did not know whether the orders they received from Wilhelmstrasse came from the master of yesterday or the master of the future.

Finally the resignation of the Chancellor was announced in March 1891 and fell like a thunderbolt. All the subordinates of Bismarck wondered whether the retirement of their chief from power meant their own dismissal.

Count Münster on his arrival in Paris had done his utmost to be agreeable to every one and had proved himself to be most conciliating. He had invited me several times to the Embassy and had talked to me a great deal about the difficulties of his mission, the complexity of his position, and the unsatisfactory condition of international relations. He had always welcomed

me most cordially, and had almost insisted upon my returning to see him, to keep him posted with regard to public opinion, and to give him any advice I might think useful for the maintenance of peaceful relations between the two countries.

One morning in June, three months after the resignation of Prince Bismarck, I read without much surprise, in several journals, a telegram from Berlin to the effect that "there was a rumour afloat there of the recall of Count Münster, German Ambassador in Paris, and that he was to be replaced by another diplomatist."

I went immediately to the Embassy and asked the Count how much truth there was in this statement concerning him.

The Ambassador was rather nervous and irritated.

"They are stabbing me in the back," he said. "They cannot forgive me because, in the quarrel between the Emperor and the Chancellor, I sided with my Sovereign. Prince Bismarck cannot put up with the situation of being nobody, and he wants to drag others down with him in his fall."

"Excuse me," I interrupted, "but I thought that, on the contrary, the Chancellor had accepted his withdrawal from public affairs very philosophically, and that he was rather glad to be relieved of the burden of power."

"I thought so, too," answered Count Münster, "but I thought so for only half an hour. At the end of thirty minutes my illusions had vanished and I knew what to think of his frame of mind."

And then, before I had added a word or asked another question of any kind, Count Münster, with a shade of

irony in his voice, began the following extraordinary story, which I now tell without altering a single word:

"On Wednesday, the 19th of March of last year" [1891], "I arrived at Berlin. My first call was on Prince Bismarck. I was quite ignorant of what had taken place the previous day. The Prince, after the exchange of the first greetings, told me that he had resigned. He made the statement in a calm voice, a smile on his lips, congratulating himself on being able to resume his country life, of which he was so fond, to revisit his forests and broad plains, for which he had a strong liking, and of becoming himself once again during the few remaining years he had to live. In short, he was happy at the idea of its being possible for him to spend the whole of his time without being harassed by constant anxieties and worries. I evinced great surprise at this news and attempted some objections; but I did not maintain this line of conduct long, for the countenance of the Prince, his language and tone of voice impressed me greatly, and, I should add, filled me with admiration for him. I discovered in him a wonderful philosophy, the accents of a man who divests himself of his honours and power with ease and manly resolution, and who, with the satisfaction of having well occupied his life and accomplished his duty, resumes the path which leads him to nobly won repose. I asked myself how such a man's place could be filled, and I did not comprehend how, in view of the attitude he must to the last moment have maintained, the young Emperor could have taken it upon himself to part with a man who, by the self-control of which he was giving proof at so very critical a moment, showed what eminent services he might yet have rendered

his master. Yes, I confess the more the Prince's attitude excited my admiration the less could I account for the Emperor's having decided on overturning him, and the less could I see how such a man was to be replaced. This twofold idea haunted me while the Prince was speaking, and then, as often happens in such circumstances, I suddenly recalled to mind in full detail two scenes which I had witnessed, two conversations which I had heard. From that moment, while listening to the Prince's monologue, I understood how the Emperor could have conceived and realised the idea of provoking and accepting the Chancellor's retirement, and I foresaw the successor he would give him. Then all became clear to me on the two points. I knew the young Emperor's perfect veneration for his grandfather, and I placed together this respectful homage and the first scene which my mind had called up.

"A year before his death, at a tea-party which he attended, the old Emperor, who had long been conversing with a lady, raising his voice so as to be heard by me and others, uttered the following words, which had fixed themselves in my memory:

"'Yes, I assure you, you do not see things from such a good standpoint as I do, but Bismarck has become very stubborn, and it takes all my strength of will to put up with him; but when I am driven to extremities and things cannot go on further, the choice of his successor will not embarrass me. My mind is made up—it will be General Caprivi.'

"As the lady appeared somewhat amazed at the name, Emperor William continued:

"'Yes, the man is not very well known, but I have

had him under my orders, I have often talked with him, and I assure you his appointment is the best possible choice if it ever becomes necessary to part with Bismarck.'

"I was, therefore, almost convinced that General Caprivi would come into office, for I was sufficiently well acquainted with Emperor William I. to know that he must have held the same language to his grandson, to whom he always repeated on the following day the conversations he had had, and to whom he must certainly have repeated the one I have just recalled.

"As I continued to listen to, and at times to converse with, Prince Bismarck, my surprise increasing at the continued calmness with which he was relating his resignation, another of the Emperor's conversations flashed across my mind and greatly lessened the astonishment I had at the first moment experienced when Prince Bismarck informed me of his retirement. I remembered that some considerable time before the Emperor William's death, at a period when his health was fairly good, he attended a 'punch' given by his grandson, the present Emperor, to officers of all arms. Prince Bismarck had shortly before appointed his son, Count Herbert, Secretary of State, Minister of Foreign Affairs.

"The Emperor William I., speaking aloud, concealing nothing from all the officers who were listening, said: 'It must be admitted that this young Count Herbert has got on prodigiously fast under the rule of his father. It is the greatest act of nepotism which politics have ever recorded.'

"I took the liberty of saying to the Emperor, 'But how is it Your Majesty has not made the remark to him,

for I see that this act of favour, of such importance to public affairs, has not escaped your observation?'

"'Why,' said the Emperor, 'I cannot at this moment part with the Prince; he is necessary to his country and is still necessary to me. I should have readily made the remark to him, but I reflected that, as he does not feel the impropriety of these extraordinary promotions, he could not take the remark coolly, and that, if I made it, it might have more serious consequences than I intended.'

"The more I reflected on these two conversations of the Emperor William I., the less surprised I was both at Prince Bismarck's resignation and at the young Emperor's resolution, for I saw that, in accepting the resignation, he had, as it were, followed the indications of his grandfather's desire, and had beforehand chosen the successor pointed out to him. Knowing how profound was his respect for the old monarch, I felt convinced that he considered himself screened by these recollections and by that authority; and that they had inspired him with the energy and resolution of which he had given proof in parting, almost harshly, with the Great Chancellor.

"I rose and said to the Chancellor that, as the Chamber was sitting, I was going thither.

"The Prince replied:

"'Wait a moment; I will put on my uniform and accompany you.'

"He left the room. A few minutes afterward I heard the Prince and the Princess talking in a very animated way and in a loud tone. Their conversation lasted a quarter of an hour, at the end of which time the Prince reëntered the room, without having changed his attire. He had

a large letter open in his hand. He had turned pale and had an irritated expression. He came up to me and said:

"'I cannot accompany you. I have this moment received a letter from that young man in which he informs me that he confers on me the title of Duke of Lauenburg; this plainly indicates that my resignation is definitive and my disgrace complete. I cannot accept such a retirement. He will soon see that a Bismarck is not dismissed in this style.'

"He then began walking up and down the room in great wrath, uttering threats, accusing everybody, inveighing against his adversaries and the intriguers who had worked in opposition to him. I saw, in short, a man who was vociferating against his fall, and whom the conversation with the Princess had evidently worked up, for at all times she and his son had incited him to violent resolutions. It was they who encouraged him in all the precipitate or extreme acts with which he had been reproached.

"I then comprehended that when he had received me and had talked with such philosophic calmness and dignity of his resignation, he did not believe it was final, but, notwithstanding all that had passed, was persuaded that the Emperor would ask him to resume his post and not to consider his resignation as definitive. I confess that I was then struck by surprise and sadness. I took leave of a man who in the space of a single visit had so strangely altered in my eyes."

So spoke Count Münster. He added to his extraordinary story a detail which was decidedly piquant. On going away after his last interview with the Chancellor,

he asked before leaving the house whether it would not be possible for him to pay his respects to Princess Bismarck. But an aide-de-camp of the Emperor, who was just passing by and who recognised him, said:

"Oh, no, Excellency! I do not think it would be a favourable moment for you to see the Princess. . . . To give you an example of the state of mind she is now in, a little while ago I took her a portrait of the Emperor which had been sent by His Majesty to Prince Bismarck as a souvenir. On seeing it the Princess exclaimed, 'Let it be taken to Friedrichsruhe and placed in the stable!' "

As he finished, Count Münster turned to me and said: "You see why I have reason to believe that Prince Bismarck is not reconciled to his fall. I have also reason to believe that he does not forgive me for not having followed him, and the report of my recall, spread abroad by his friends, is more the expression of a desire than of a reality."

Thereupon, after talking about several other matters, I left Count Münster and went away.

In the evening I telegraphed an account of this memorable interview to the *Times*. The next day it appeared in the columns of that paper. The day following it was reproduced by the press of the whole world, for it had been transmitted by telegraph to the farthest extremities of the globe. It gave rise everywhere to the most varied comments; some were ironical, others indignant, still others amused. An English paper which republished it *in extenso* added the following line:

"M. de Blowitz has once more been guilty of grave indiscretion."

Here, by way of parenthesis, I should like to say a few words on a subject which I have deeply at heart. In the course of my long career the phrase I have just quoted has been printed about me at various intervals. I have more than once been accused of indiscretion and more than once the epithet "indiscreet" has been applied to my name.

I will begin by saying that none of those persons who have reproached me in this way could ever quote one example, one single example, to show that when I gave my word of honour to be silent, or when I promised not to repeat anything, I have ever broken my word or promise. I defy any one to prove that I have ever committed an act of treachery, and only to give one instance, when Pope Leo XIII., after a conversation of more than an hour, in the course of which he had made certain statements that would have caused a great stir in the world, asked me, through Cardinal Jacobini, to give my word of honour not to repeat what had been said, I gave it, and not only did I never repeat a word of the pontifical statements, but I even destroyed the notes I had taken and endeavoured to forget what had been said.

But if one calls it an indiscretion to repeat things that have been said to me, a journalist, by persons who have not taken the precaution to demand secrecy; if it be an indiscretion to try to find out what is going on and to tell what one knows, to inform the public of all that one has discovered—why, certainly, then I flatter myself that I have been indiscreet; I boast of it, and it is an extra reason for my being proud. I consider that a journalist is, first of all, the servant of his paper and of the public. I consider that he ought to keep nothing

hidden from them; I consider that all he knows, all he learns, all he sees, all he hears and all that he feels belongs to his paper, and that there is only one single law in the world which should prevent him from speaking, which should close his lips—the law of honour!

How often have people, sometimes people in very high positions, come to me and said, "I am going to tell you something extremely interesting, but it is with the understanding that what I tell you is for you alone, and you must not say a word about it in your paper."

I have always answered them:

"Then don't tell me your story; keep it to yourself. I am not inquisitive for my own sake—only for that of my paper. I do not care to know what happens if the public is not to know it. I am a journalist and not a confessor!"

And it has always seemed to me extremely grotesque for people to imagine that a man who is a journalist, who spends all his time, uses all his efforts, his brain, his energy to know about things, who goes to see Ministers, who receives Ambassadors at his table, who rushes to the other end of the world to interview Sovereigns, should do all that for the solitary pleasure of being well posted, of knowing for himself, just for his own private self, what is happening, so that he may store it up in his own memory and never let it be known.

No; I have always told things when no imperative obligation prevented my doing so. I have always told my paper and my readers all that I knew, because they had a right to know it. And I maintain that journalists who are silent when they could speak fail in their duty to the paper which they are supposed to serve and in their

SILVER STATUE, REPRESENTING "TELEGRAPHIC CORRESPONDENCE," GIVEN TO M. DE BLOWITZ ON HIS RETIREMENT, BY THE PARIS CORRESPONDENTS OF ALL FOREIGN PAPERS, DECEMBER 18, 1902

duty to the public for whom they are supposed to be working.

This said, I return to my story.

When Count Münster, who had not asked for secrecy, saw in the *Times* of June 30, 1881, the account of Prince Bismarck's resignation which he had related to me, he did not at first show any signs of displeasure or of surprise. He did not offer the slightest protest.

His displeasure only commenced three or four days later, when he received some cuttings from German papers criticising in disagreeable terms his statements. His displeasure was transformed into serious annoyance when the cuttings were followed by letters from friends of Prince Bismarck, written in the most angry and threatening terms.

The Ambassador then, and not until then, weighed the importance of the words he had uttered, and was anxious about the consequences to himself that those words might entail. Accordingly, eight or ten days after the publication in the *Times*, Count Münster sent me a secretary from his Embassy, who spoke to me as follows:

"The Ambassador," he said, "regrets that in the account you published, and which was very exact, you should have introduced the name of Princess Bismarck. He fears that the comments raised by this incident may cause him serious unpleasantness. He therefore wishes me to inform you that, in order to attenuate the effect produced, he will ask the Wolff Telegraphy Agency to declare that there was a certain amount of imagination in the story published. He sincerely hopes that you will not take this amiss, and that you will only attribute

this rectification to the imperative necessity of circumstances."

I merely replied:

"Tell Count Münster that if the publication of his conversation is really likely to cause any annoyance to him, I shall take no exception to the slight reserve he wishes to make, and will not even protest in any way."

Thereupon, Count Münster's messenger thanked me heartily, and the next day the Wolff Telegraph Agency communicated an official note to all the papers, stating in the name of the German Ambassador in Paris that there was a certain amount of imagination in the account published in the *Times* about the resignation of Prince Bismarck. In accordance with my promise, I made no reply.

But, strangely enough, this official note, instead of calming the papers devoted to Bismarck, appeared to have exasperated them still more. They declared that this rectification was equal to an avowal; they denounced the German Ambassador in Paris in the most violent terms; they demanded that he should take back his words; they coupled with his name epithets which were almost abusive—in a word, they opened wide the floodgates of their anger and indignation.

This fearful deluge caused Count Münster to lose all his composure, and without consulting me this time, a month after my article had appeared in the *Times*, he published a fresh denial in the following terms:

"We are authorizd by Count Münster, who is at present at his country seat at Demebourg, near Hanover, to deny the authenticity of the account of an interview

with him published a few weeks ago in a newspaper. The article appeared without his knowledge, and he repudiates all responsibility for the statements contained in it."

And as the storm, far from calming down, continued to rage, on the 2nd of August—I say the 2nd of August—absolutely wild with terror (that is his only excuse), Count Münster went so far as to write to Count Herbert Bismarck a letter beginning as follows:

"I beg you to tell the Prince that I am quite beside myself on account of the invention of this . . . Blowitz, and to express to him my regret at the wrong use which has been made of my name."

The dots in this phrase represent an epithet, probably abusive, which the *Hamburger Nachrichten* thought better to suppress.

. . . . . .

I will stop here, and will not qualify the action of a man bearing a well-known and respected name, who, after having acknowledged the exactitude of a statement made by him, after having asked permission, for private reasons, to add some attenuation, after publicly declaring that there was "some imagination" in what had been published, leaving it understood that there was much that was true, and after asking for a promise that no reply should be made to his statement, could forget himself to such an extent as to write a letter of the kind.

I was, however, more than avenged, for public opinion, which finally gave judgment on the matter, did not doubt for a single instant who told the truth—the diplomatist who spoke or the journalist who was silent.

For more than six months afterward, the organs of Prince Bismarck continued their attacks against Count Münster, thus proving the value they attached to his denials, and the Ex-Chancellor himself said "I shall never forget it," clearly showing toward which side his opinion leaned.

I particularly wished to write this chapter in order to show the treatment to which a correspondent exposes himself when he wants to tell the public all he knows, and also to show how almost impossible it is for those two complex beings, the diplomatist and the journalist, to have any intercourse with each other. In order for them to agree, the former must keep silent about what he knows and the latter must talk about that of which he knows nothing. As soon as the one ceases to keep his counsel and the other tries to be informed about that of which he talks, what happened to me will happen again.

May this serve as a lesson to diplomatists and also to journalists!

CHAPTER XVII

Diplomacy and Journalism

And now, as I have dwelt briefly on that delicate and complex question of the relations between Journalism and Diplomacy, I do not see why I should not narrate, in a final chapter, some of the numerous anecdotes on the same subject which are now present in my memory, or why, before the last pages of the book are reached, I should not give some proofs of the ingratitude and treachery which represent to the journalist who does his duty the cost-price of any success he may obtain.

During my long career it has happened to me only once that a public man, a statesman, has testified with any warmth his surprised gratitude at an act of personal discretion on my part done at the expense of immediate journalistic success, when he himself had, so to speak, furnished me with the very element of this success.

One evening in November, 1875, I happened to be at the Quai d'Orsay house of the Duc Decazes, who was then French Minister of Foreign Affairs. We were in the billiard room. The Duke was full of spirit. He was playing at billiards with a friend of the Duchess, who was playing so well that she seemed likely to win. Suddenly the door opened. A Cabinet *attaché* entered and handed to the Duke a small bundle of telegrams. Opening the packet, the Duke began to read one of the telegrams. Suddenly he became red, then pale, and

wiped his temples moist with sweat. Then, as if maddened, with an irresistible movement, he took the billiard cue, which he had put down, struck it on the rim of the table, broke it across his knee and threw the bits into the fire. The persons present, it may be imagined, were in a great state of mind. Suddenly approaching me, his teeth set with anger, he said: "Do you know what I have just heard? Derby has just bought 200,000 Suez shares from Ismail, while every possible effort has been made to conceal from us, not only the negotiations, but even Ismail's intention of selling them. It's an infamy! It's England putting her hand on the Isthmus of Suez, and my personal failure has in no way retarded the act. I authorise you to say what you have just seen. I even beg you to say it, and to add that Lord Derby will have to pay for that." And he added, half talking to himself, "Yes, I swear that he shall pay for it!" He then quickly left the room, and I, too, went out. On the way I went over the scene in my mind as I have here described it from my notes of the time. I saw instantly what an impression the story would make when told in my telegram, and reproduced throughout the world to the glory of the journal in which it appeared.

But when I took up my pen to write it out, other thoughts invaded my mind. I saw the two Ministers of Foreign Affairs of England and France pitted against each other, the malignity of certain diplomatists poisoning the wound, and I understood that, after all, I could not tell the story, even though I added that I was authorised to do so, for the mere publication would have all the aspect of a veritable provocation. I saw that it would only furnish arms to the foes of the Duc Decazes, whom

so many people desired to overturn, and that this revelation of Lord Derby's cleverness would be gratuitously interpreted as in itself an aggression. I dropped the pen and left the office, announcing that I would not return that night. On the morrow, at eleven o'clock, I was told that there was a messenger from the Duc Decazes.

Immediately after luncheon I went to the Quai d'Orsay. The Duc Decazes had just come down to his work, and I was immediately introduced into his cabinet. He handed a telegram to me. In a tone almost harsh he asked, "Why didn't you publish the scene that you witnessed yesterday, as I asked you to do?" I explained to him my reasons for keeping silent. He got up, seized both my hands, looked at me with profound emotion, and said: "You understand that I have just said what I did as a joke. You have acted as a friend of the Minister, as a friend of peace; and never shall I forget what you have done for me—for us; for you have sacrificed a journalistic success to your sense of duty. Believe me, the latter is the better memory."

The Duc Decazes remained two years longer in power, when he was carried away by the electoral storm which burst in the false *coup d'état* of the 16th of May, 1877. If he ever referred to the purchase of the Suez Canal shares by Lord Derby, the matter has remained a diplomatic secret; the public has known nothing of it, and the spirit of France was not troubled. To-day Lord Derby and the Duc Decazes are no more. The shares have remained in the peaceful possession of Great Britain, and Lord Derby could feel at his death that he had been the author of one of the most clever and paying acts of patriotism possible; for besides the immense hold which

this act has given to England on the affairs of the Suez Canal, it annually gets from this possession to-day the enormous sum of £17,000,000.

I must add that on two other occasions I saw the Duc Decazes the victim of almost the same anger, and on both occasions he recalled to me the incident of which I had just spoken and the gratitude which he felt in reference to it. I happened once to be with him at Vichy, when the sons of Ismail were stopping there in the charge of an Egyptian colonel and a tutor whose name escapes me. One day these Princes gave a dinner. They invited the Duc Decazes and me as well. The Duke sat at the right of Ismail's eldest boy, and I was on the second son's left. The dinner, entirely in the European fashion, was served by a single *maître d'hôtel*. The soup had been passed before we sat down to table. The *maître d'hôtel* first served the eldest of the Princes, then the second, then the others (I believe they were four), and it was only then that he served the Duc Decazes, who appeared to be somewhat surprised. But he undoubtedly thought it only a single oversight, and, as he was forbidden fish, he refused the course. But the same thing occurred throughout the dinner. The younger Princes were mere children, with good appetites, accustomed to be humoured like Princes brought up by tutors who trembled before them, and they turned and returned the dishes to get the best portions, so that by the time the plates reached the Duc Decazes they presented anything but an appetizing appearance. The Duke had become a little pale. He had omitted the second course, as I have said. The following course he had refused so as to make his thought apparent, hoping that

that would suffice to call attention to the mistake that was being committed. He was the French Minister of Foreign Affairs; Vichy was French soil; and it was, so to speak, France whom these young foreign Princes had invited to their table. All honour was due to France. The dishes ought certainly to have been first passed to the Duke, and only if he refused to help himself before the eldest Prince, should the plate have reached him second. But matters went on quite differently. During the entire dinner—and it was a long one—the plates were offered in succession to all the Princes, and came back pillaged to the Duc Decazes, who refused them.

I saw his anger rising to his face as the dinner went on. I feared an explosion. But the diplomatist restrained himself, and the gentleman in him found a smile to respond to the Prince every time that the latter addressed him, which, however, was not often. When the dinner was over the Duke called to him the Master of Ceremonies, and said to him quietly, but in a tone of muffled wrath: "You are not very well up in the arrangement of official dinners, sir. I will see that you get better instructions." And while the officer became livid at these words, the Duke turned his back on him and, coming up to me, said: "This time, too, I beg you not to say anything about this ridiculous business; it will be quickly set right." And, indeed, the result was, I believe, that the unfortunate officer soon lost his situation.

The other time when I saw the Duc Decazes angry, and when he silently recalled my discretion in reference to the Suez shares, was as follows: France had sent a vessel, the *Orenoque*, to Civita Vecchia, where it anchored

and for some years was there as a sort of defiance to the conquered unity of Italy. The idea was that if it were necessary the Pope might find there a refuge in Italian waters as a safe stage in getting away to foreign soil. This ship, anchored there in constant protest against the occupation of Rome by the Italians, became an object of irritation in Italian eyes. The Chevalier Nigra, then Italian Ambassador in Paris, often spoke to me of what he picturesquely called "*une faute d'orthographie obstinée*" which France was committing in her relations with Italy.

"But why," said I to him one day, "why don't you speak to the Duc Decazes?"

"That's impossible," replied the Chevalier Nigra. "Once I mention the matter to him, we shall have to go up to the very end. In a matter of this sort there is no half-way point, for when a nation has said, 'I beg you to withdraw this ship,' it must soon add, 'I wish you to withdraw it.' But you, when you see the Duke, explain to him what I have just been saying, that he may understand why, notwithstanding the irritation this matter of the *Orenoque* causes, I cannot speak of it to him."

And, indeed, as a result of this conversation I saw the Duc Decazes.

"We certainly should have this matter out between us," said he to me; "but it must be quite clear that the conversation is to be a purely friendly one, quite unofficial, and that no written trace shall remain of it, and that all that is said shall be said from me to him, and from him to me."

The conversation took place. I afterward learned

that it finished with these words, uttered by the Chevalier de Nigra: "You will force us to seek the friendship of those who treat us less cavalierly." I had the bad luck to drop in at the Quai d'Orsay just at the moment when the Chevalier de Nigra was going out. The conversation with the latter had exasperated the Duc Decazes, and when I entered his room he was in a paroxysm of anger. I saw it as soon as I entered, but it was too late, and in my embarrassment, not quite knowing what to say, I limited myself to these words, which were quite contrary to my habit: *'Eh bien, M. le Duc, qu'y a-t-il de nouveau?'* ("Well, Duke, what is the news?") The Duke, who was only looking for an excuse to burst out, roughly replied: "Really, *mon cher*, it isn't my business to do your correspondence." I got angry in my turn; I stopped suddenly and replied: "True, sir; but it's a very good thing for my readers that it is not your business." The Duke remained a moment uncertain, but as I started toward the door he burst into a laugh and, getting up, came to me and said: "*Allons*, give me your hand and make peace. You know well enough that I promised never to get annoyed with you." And, indeed, amid all the vicissitudes of time and things, I had the honour of keeping his friendship to the end.

On another occasion, and so to speak, in spite of myself, I mentioned a diplomatist from whom I had a communication. This diplomatist, who still occupies a highly important post, wrote to me in 1876 as follows, thanking me for an invitation to dinner addressed to him on the intervention of a common friend, "I have now for a long time desired to make the acquaintance of a man whose reputation is based on a journalistic work beyond

and above all criticism," etc. We were soon on the best of terms, and I know few persons whose gift of lively, piquant, anecdotal talk was so fine as his. One day, while passing through Paris, he fell ill at a hotel. I went to see him, and showing me a copy of a confidential despatch addressed to his Government, he said, "*Sac-à-la-papier*" (this was his way of saying *Sac-à-papier*) "read that—it would be amusing to publish." I was naturally of his opinion, and he ended by giving it to me, urging me to cut out anything which appeared to me compromising. I went through this work of expurgation most conscientiously. The telegram appeared in a remote corner in the outer sheet of the paper. It did not make the stir I had expected, and, indeed, it was very little spoken of. But the Minister of Foreign Affairs to whom it was addressed noticed its publication and spoke of it to my friendly informant, who forthwith wrote me a violent letter as if I had abused his confidence, quite forgetting that it was he himself who had entrusted the despatch to me for publication.

I have never seen this remarkable and charming man since, and the loss of his friendship is the price I had to pay for having involuntarily stripped him, as regards his chief, of that useful anonymity behind which alone a trained diplomatist manages to preserve the sweetness of his manners and the charming smile of his lips.

Need I recall for the edification of any journalist who reads this that in his relation with diplomacy he must always remember that the true diplomatist necessarily knows nothing of gratitude; that he regards the journalist as an auxiliary, sometimes useful and always dangerous; and that he will never hesitate to throw him overboard

when it suits his ideas of his duty to do so? In this connection I recall a striking and decisive illustration.

It was in 1874, at the moment when the Arnim trial was going on in Germany. Baron Holstein, who had played so curious a rôle in connection with Count Arnim, was Second Secretary of the German Embassy at Paris. His intervention in this terrible question between Arnim and Bismarck was not liked and was badly judged here. French public opinion looked askance on the hand of Germany in the interior politics of the country, and Baron Holstein was violently attacked for his rôle in this matter. The *Journal des Débats*, which enjoyed then a real power and influence, was particularly noticeable in its campaign against Baron Holstein, and its attitude was such that, if persisted in, Baron Holstein's stay at Paris must necessarily have become impossible. It was at this time that I received a visit from Mr. Rodolphe Lindau, who was also at the German Embassy and who brought to me a document justifying Baron Holstein. By very convincing arguments he showed me that I ought to undertake his defense against the *Journal des Débats*. In the existing state of French public opinion this was a heavy task; but I undertook it conscientiously as a duty, and I had the satisfaction—always so rare, however—of seeing that paper lay down its arms before my arguments. This took place toward the end of December, 1874, and on the 30th of that month Baron Holstein wrote to me that if he had not been kept at home by an attack of *la grippe* he would have hastened to come in person to thank me. A week later, on January 8, 1875, indeed, he did come, and thanked me warmly. I had made, he said, by my courageous intervention, his stay in Paris

possible. We talked for some time of his personal situation. I told him that I was myself just then in a critical place, not surely knowing whether or not I should succeed Mr. Hardman as chief correspondent of the *Times*, and that I had, of course, many competitors to whom I could oppose only my devotion and my work. Some days after—that is, on January 16—a friendly hand sent me a letter of Baron Holstein, sixteen octavo pages in length, bearing the superscription: "*Kaiserlich Deutsche Bothschaft in Frankreich,*" and entirely written and signed by the Baron's hand. It was addressed to one of the most intimate friends of Mr. John Delane, editor of the *Times*, and denounced me as quite under the thumb of the Duc Decazes, and as wilfully ignoring and concealing from my readers an Orléanist plot which was preparing a *coup d'état.* In this letter the *Times* was urged to send to Paris some clever and impartial person to keep the paper informed of what was here going on underneath as well as on the surface.

This letter, I repeat, reached me on January 16, a week after Baron Holstein's visit of gratitude, and it had been sent on the 12th. I need not say that I have carefully preserved this curious and instructive document now for almost eighteen years, and if I divulge it to-day it is because it is so appropriate in these pages, showing, as it does, with what stoicism a diplomatist bent upon his duty rids himself of the duty when he thinks that he ought to do so in the interests of a higher cause.

. . . . . .

My memoirs are now at an end.

The life of a journalist is so ephemeral, what he accomplishes is so swiftly swept away, what he writes is so

ALL THE PARIS CORRESPONDENTS OF THE FOREIGN PRESS ASSEMBLED AROUND M. DE BLOWITZ

At the Hotel Ritz, Paris, on the day of his retirement, December 18, 1902

promptly wiped out by oblivion, that I have taken the liberty, in the preceding pages, of retracing, as they return to my mind, some of the historical events in which I happened to play a part.

I have written this book without any other afterthought than to survive, for a few months, TIME—that rolls by and carries all away. I have not narrated everything that I have seen or learned during my long and adventurous career, because I consider that I have the right to unfold only secrets that are mine, and because I do not wish to follow the example of some men who, when they speak from beneath the tomb, accuse, attack, destroy—and only give their victims an opportunity to reply by dipping their nails into the planks of one's coffin.

All that I have written is the expression of truth. I have considered it my duty to present, in their real simplicity, events with which I have been closely connected, and which others, in their narratives, have amplified less in order to tell the truth than to disguise it at my expense.

I have never sought applause nor feared criticism. I know that the fatigued reader stops on the way. I need not, therefore, ask those who have followed me to the end to refrain from reproaching me too severely for the time they have spent in the company of so poor a personality as myself.

THE END

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